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Thursday, February 26, 2015

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Warning to cat owners over pellet gun thugs

OWNERS are being urged to remain vigilant after a cat was shot in the stomach.

The 10-year-old cat underwent life-saving surgery after it was shot with a pellet gun in Fairmile Road, Halesowen.

Vets4Pets Halesowen have put out a warning on their Facebook page which has been shared more than 850 times.

The cat was taken to Manor Veterinary Centre on Kent Road on the evening of February 12 and underwent a three hour operation to save its life.

The cat's owner, who did not want to be named, said: "At the minute we have a really poorly boy, the current costs stand at over £50,000."

Upsetting

"What is really upsetting is this time a couple of weeks back we had a perfectly healthy cat."

"It is absolutely terrible. A reward will be given for genuine information."

Pellets were also discovered in the leg of another cat by a neighbour.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, anyone found guilty of causing unnecessary suffering to an animal could face a maximum six month prison sentence or a £20,000 fine.

Police blitz on car cruisers

MORE than a dozen car cruisers have been targeted in the first crackdown by police after tough new rules banning race meetings on a main route through the Black Country.

Police were out in force on the Black Country Route in Bilston, the Birmingham New Road and in areas of Dudley, Darlaston and Walsall on a major operation to enforce a new court injunction. They hit cruising hotspots in a four hour operation and 15 drivers had been issued with warnings.

PARENTS' PLEA TO SAVE SERVICE

WORRIED parents have signed a petition calling on Dudley Council to scrap proposed cuts to free transport for children with special needs.

The 859 signatories also object to plans to close two centres supporting children with speech and language difficulties.

The criticism has prompted council bosses to extend its consultation on the matter, meaning a final decision will be delayed. Dudley Council is seeking to save a total of £27 million over the next three years. Bringing in both proposals would save the council more than £250,000 each year.

The authority currently pays for dozens of children with additional needs to travel to specialist nurseries in the borough but says it is not legally required to do so.

Marc Carter, who runs the WeLoveCarers charity in Brierley Hill, said: "I am very pleased with the numbers we have got signing this petition but I'm not surprised because it is such an emotive issue."

Alternatives

"It shows that Dudley Council need to be talking to people and looking at the alternatives available."

"We know there has got to be savings and there are lots of things to be cut but we simply don't see how these proposals will save money."

"If the transport is cut there will need to be more local provision in existing nurseries. We are not talking about one or two nurseries, we are talking about them all."

The council currently pays for 49 children to travel to specialist nurseries in the borough.

Mr Carter knows first

By Dominic Bareham

hand the value of the service having previously used it to transport his autistic son to Netherton Park nursery.

He added: "Ben would not have coped in a mainstream busy nursery. I didn't have a car and I lived near Russells Hall at the time so the service was vital."

Under the proposed cuts two centres supporting children with speech and language difficulties in Dudley will also close. Parents say they have been left fearing their children could be placed into mainstream schools where they would have difficulty coping.

Campaigners say they will fight the cost-cutting moves. But council bosses claim they have been forced to consider axing the service after Government cuts.

From September, Dudley Council is proposing to deliver the specialist service at just one site, Hob Green Primary School in Stourbridge. This would mean centres at St Margaret's at Hasbury Church of England Primary School in Halesowen and at Quarry Bank Primary School both closing. It would see the number of places available drop by eight.

Tim Crumpton, Dudley Council's children's chief, said the changes would improve the service.

Husband fights back after meningitis



Meningitis survivor Paul Fowkes back home in Bournes Hill with his wife Lynne after nearly losing his life to the illness

"I'm not one of those people who dwell on what's happened - I just look to the future."

That's the message from a remarkable man whose life has been turned upside down by meningitis.

Paul Fowkes was an active man who worked for an engineering company and a keen supporter of West Bromwich Albion.

But the 61-year-old was struck down by a severe case of meningitis which left him in hospital for more than two months. He lost parts of his hands and feet.

Now he is back home in Hale-

sowen, battling to fitness, Paul and his family are urging others to look out for signs of the illness.

"I want to make people aware of the condition and how quickly they have to react if this happens to them," said Paul's wife Lynne, who worked as a catering systems manager at the University of Birmingham. "I didn't think that this would happen in our wildest dreams," said the 59-year-old.

Paul worked for Griff Chains, Cradley Heath, which builds conveyor belts. Last November he was hit by debilitating flu-like symptoms leaving him confined to bed.

His wife grew increasingly concerned and called for doctors to assess him at home. She discovered a purple rash was developing. Paul was rushed to Russells Hall Hospital where doctors told Lynne her husband could have died in a matter of two hours.

He was treated in intensive care for three weeks where medics said circulation to his toes and fingers were so bad they had no option but to amputate.

The couple, married for 20 years with two children and three grandchildren, are looking to move to a bungalow in Oldbury as they learn to adapt to Paul's disabilities.

Money is needed for hamburger island plan

A £12.7 million overhaul to tackle congestion around a busy traffic island is on track to begin later this year.

Sandwell Council wants to start work on the Birchley island project after plans were backed at a meeting last week.

But officials from the authority say it will depend on how quickly cash for the scheme can be secured.

Once work begins, the project is expected to take 24 months to complete.

Council bosses said a detailed business case was now being worked on after a favoured option had been agreed.

Once finalised, the bid will be submitted to the Black Country Local Enterprise Board, which will decide if the cash should be given.

Councillors approved plans for the 'hamburger' island after experts said it would be best way of easing traffic congestion at the island, which is used by around 92,000 drivers a day.

Plans for the scheme were re-examined leading to the launch of a second round of public consultation - with 83 per cent of the public, motorists and businesses in favour of the congestion-busting measure which splits the traffic island in two.

Man in court over bag grab

A MAN appeared at court charged with attempted robbery and possession of a bladed weapon in public.

Ben Wilkes, 27, of no fixed abode, appeared at Dudley Magistrates Court on Monday after a handbag was snatched from a woman in Trindle Road, Dudley, on Sunday morning.

The 49-year-old woman was left shaken but unhurt.

Wilkes was remanded in custody and will appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on April 8.

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Pledge to root out dishonest officers

POLICE chiefs have pledged to take all appropriate measures to 'root out internal corruption' after a special constable was handed a suspended sentence for fraud.

Mahesh Randeria, 51, of Stourbridge, admitted claiming over £1,300 more than he was entitled to in mileage travel expenses between October 2010 and November 2013.

At Birmingham Crown Court

he was given a four-month prison sentence suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to pay back £1,343.50 to the force. Randeria, of Teasdale Way, will have to pay court costs.

Police said he had worked for the force 28 years and had been based at Birmingham Central Police Station.

He earlier pleaded guilty to fraudulently claiming travel expenses.

Randeria has been suspended from his role as a special and will be subject to an internal disciplinary process now the criminal investigation had been completed.

Following the hearing, Chief Inspector Darren Walsh, from the force's professional standards department, said: "It is vital our communities have trust and confidence in everything we do. Therefore,

West Midlands Police demands the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and conduct from all police staff and police officers at all times.

"We take any allegations of dishonesty very seriously."

The court was told suspicions had first been raised was an audit was carried out and the discrepancies had been revealed.

Cost of children in care is rising to over £2m

TAKING more children into care is expected to cost cash-strapped Dudley Council more than £2 million in the next three years.

Bosses have revealed an extensive plan to reduce the number of youngsters it has to take into care in an effort to save cash.

The council will set up a new commission to work with other agencies and undertake a 'robust review' to see how numbers can be decreased.

But a report ahead of a cabinet meeting being held yesterday (Wednesday) warned that the new body may not be able to deliver financial savings until 2016.

Costs have soared in recent years placing huge financial strains on the authority which is battling cuts in Government funding.

Council bosses have revealed they have been unable to reduce the numbers in its care as quickly as it predicted. There are currently 754 'looked after children', which has fallen from 772 in September last year.

Police start to close the front desks

FRONT desks at Stourbridge and Halesowen police stations will close this Saturday, February 28.

The move comes as West Midlands Police looks to save £3 million. The force is axing 27 front counters over 12 months.

Others in the Black Country closing on that date include Aldridge, Willenhall, Wednesfield, Tipton, Wednesbury and Old Hill.

The counter at Dudley Police Station was not included in Saturday's closures after Dudley North MP Ian Austin launched a campaign calling for the facility to be saved.

Mr Austin presented policing minister Mike Penning with a petition containing more than 2,000 signatures to keep the station open to the public. He is planning to present it to Parliament and wants more residents to support the campaign.

Mr Austin said: "It is encouraging that they are listening to local people but the threat hasn't yet been lifted and we need to step up the campaign. It is completely unacceptable that Dudley could become the largest town in the country without a police station open to the public."

Ambition

But the total remains much higher than before the recession took hold. In 2010, the figure was 480.

Councillor Tim Crumpton, cabinet member for children's services, said: "Our ambition is to ensure as many children as possible live with their families and our work around early support services continues to reduce the numbers in care."

"By establishing a commission to address issues around looked after children we will be ensuring the council uses a whole system approach, working with partners such as health and schools to help create the right conditions to support families."

Last year the council warned it was looking at a £1 million shortfall in its children's services budget

500 brave rain for heart run



Runners set off after Dudley Mayor Councillor Margaret Aston put them under starter's orders

HUNDREDS of people braved the cold and the rain to take on the Action Heart five-mile run and walk.

The annual fundraiser for the Action Heart charity saw around 500 runners start and finish at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley on Sunday. Money raised from the event will be donated to the hospital's Action Heart Centre, which is based in a purpose-built block at the hospital.

This year's fun run was extra special as it marked the 25th anniversary since it was

first held and some competitors took part in fancy dress. The course was manned by 40 stewards who have received help from Action Heart. The charity provides the largest cardiac rehabilitation programme in the country and money raised pays for heart rate monitors and gym equipment.

First runner home was Sam Lloyd-Perks of Halesowen Athletics Club in 27 minutes and 30 seconds. First of the female runners was Tessa Clarke of Wolverhampton and Bilston in 29:36.

Man, 21, is jailed for sex attacks on girls

A MAN from Stourbridge who sexually exploited two vulnerable girls has been jailed for six years and eight months.

Former factory worker Saham Amin, of Balds Lane, Lye, was sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court after pleading guilty to raping a 14-year-old and sexually assaulting a 13-year-old.

The 21-year-old preyed on the 14-year-old for around a year before the attack.

He also sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl having plied the girls with vodka.

Amin initially denied the allegations but eventually admitted the offences in light of the medical evidence and the girls' testimonies against him.

Drinking

He will also be placed upon the Sex Offender Register for life.

On September 24 last year Amin texted the elder girl and asked if she wanted to come round to his house for a 'drinking session'.

Once the pair arrived, Amin, who had been drinking, sexually assaulted the younger girl before raping the older one.

Big Centre TV set to go live

A NEW digital television channel serving the Black Country will go live this weekend.

Big Centre TV, based in Walsall, will begin broadcasting on channel eight on Freeview at 6pm on Saturday, February 28.

The channel is co-owned by former ATV presenter Mike Prince and Wolverhampton-born Chris Perry.

It will also cover Birmingham and Solihull and will see former Central TV sports broadcaster Bob Hall as its head of news and sport. It is broadcasting from Walsall School.

Mini-moto menace

A CRACKDOWN on mini-motorbikes has started at Warley Woods following complaints about riders disturbing residents living nearby.

Gates have been closed at the park to stop vehicles accessing the 100-acre woodland at night.

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Borough handed £1.7m by Lottery

MORE than £1.7 million was invested into Dudley last year through National Lottery grants.

Across the area, 54 grants were awarded to local projects including arts, sports and heritage groups.

Projects that benefited from the grants include Stourbridge Football Club, which received £46,000 to refurbish its changing rooms, and Homer Hill Park, which received £10,000 to install new play equipment.

Around £2,300 was also awarded to The Brierley Hill Project to buy computers for young people not in education or training.

Actor

Actor and performer John Barrowman, who presented last year's National Lottery Awards show, said: "Every National Lottery player should feel proud of the incredible difference they are making to the local community. They raise an astonishing £33 million every week for a huge variety of life-changing projects.

"The National Lottery Awards offer a chance to celebrate the fantastic work of Lottery-funded projects. If you know of a great project that deserves to shine, then please nominate them."

Council tax to stay frozen

A FREEZE in council tax for the fifth year running was set to be approved at a meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

Dudley Council's cabinet was gathering to rubber stamp the proposals for the borough.

The bill for a Band D property would remain at £1,125.35 for 2015/16 after the council secured a £1.2million Government grant to freeze council tax.

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "I am confident that we will continue to have the lowest council tax in the West Midlands."

Roll out barrels

REAL ale enthusiasts can choose from 90 different tipplers during Stourbridge Beer Festival from April 15 to 18. The event organised by Stourbridge and Halesowen branch of the Campaign for Real Ale will be at Stourbridge Town Hall.

Complaints put chips back on menu at hospital

CHIPS are being put back on the menu at Russells Hall Hospital following complaints from patients.

The hospital meals service has been overhauled over concerns about the lack of choice and meals not being hot enough.

Uninspiring offerings received a lukewarm response on the wards, forcing bosses to rethink what is on the menu.

Derek Eaves, quality manager at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said patients on wards where the new menus

had been trialled had welcomed the return of chips.

He told Dudley Council's Health Scrutiny Committee: "Compared with the old menus, on the pilot wards there is certainly a lot more appreciation for what they are getting."

"Chips are not particularly nutritious but they are being re-introduced because it's what they want. We are listening to patients but we have to balance that out against nutrition."

"Patient satisfaction has gone up since."

It came as concerns were again raised about offerings for patients by members of the committee.

Improvements

A survey in 2013 showed that only 44 per cent of patients were happy with what was served up. Since then bosses have been working to make improvements to the meal service. Providers Interserve invested £500,000 into overhauling the service.

A wider choice will be made available as well as new trolleys that warm plates.

For lunch and supper, patients will have the choice of four hot meals, four cold options, six side dishes and a variety of hot and cold puddings.

This is in addition to the 24 hot dishes available to pre-order from the special menu, which includes gluten free, dairy free, vegan, vegetarian and halal options.

Several unpopular meal options have been dropped.

Bus stop death driver faces 'substantial' jail sentence

By Lee Watton

A DRIVER was left facing prison after admitting killing a university student as she waited for a bus to take her to a friend's hen do.

Rebecca McManus, aged 21, died when Sukvinder Mannan's Mitsubishi Evo careered into her as she waited at a bus stop on Hagley Road West, near Bearwood.

Mannan, of Roundhills Road, Halesowen, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Tuesday.

The 33-year-old also admitted a charge of causing serious injury by dangerous driving after Harriet Barnsley was hurt on the same day. He admitted failing to provide a blood sample following the collision on May 31 last year.

Miss McManus died at the scene while Miss Barnsley, also 21, suffered serious injuries and was left in critical condition.

Judge Andrew Lockhart QC adjourned the case to a later date still to be fixed, when Mannan will be sentenced.

Disqualification

"Whatever else happens he will be receiving a substantial prison sentence," he said.

Judge Lockhart imposed an interim driving disqualification banning Mannan from the roads until his sentence.

Mannan, who is married without children, was bailed by the court but strict conditions were imposed including regular reporting to a police station. He was ordered to surrender his passport.

Judge Lockhart said the loss of life had been a 'tragedy' and said Miss McManus's family had 'suffered an enormous loss'.

Mannan spoke only to confirm his name and enter his pleas.

Inderjit Singh, 30, of Cranbourne Avenue, Ettingshall, is also accused of causing death by dangerous driving and was bailed to appear for a further hearing later in the year.

Judge Lockhart said Mannan would not be sentenced until this hearing had been completed and the results known.

Miss McManus, from Oldbury, was de-



Student Rebecca McManus, 21, described as 'bright and funny'



Sukvinder Mannan pleads guilty to causing death by dangerous driving

scribed as 'bright and funny' by family and friends. Teachers said she was 'talented, warm, generous and lovely'.

She was a creative writing student, poet and musician who attended the University of East Anglia on an English Literature with creative writing degree course.

Miss McManus was known for wearing her trademark red beret and had previously attended Stourbridge's King Edward VI College achieving four A-Levels, two at A* and two at grade A.

A family statement said: "Rebecca was bright and funny with a wonderful future to look forward to."

Miss McManus' teachers spoke highly of her. Jane Salmon, English Literature tutor

at King Edward VI College, said she had been gifted academically as well as being a talented poet and musician.

"She contributed to many aspects of college life and her warmth and generosity made her extremely popular with both staff and students," she said.

Hugo Card, 24, from Surrey, is preparing to cycle across the United States in memory of his friend Miss McManus after joining the American Coast to Coast challenge to be held next month.

Mr Card said Miss McManus' death had been devastating for everyone who knew her. "She was such a wonderful person. It is hard to believe someone so full of spirit and fun could be taken away in this way."

Following the crash, residents living near to the bus stop said they had been left stunned.

Robert Harrison, 49, who lived four doors away from the crash, said: "We have lived here for five years and not seen anything like this before."

New traffic safety measures have been proposed for the road near the scene of the tragedy.

Traffic lights will be installed along the carriageway, a major route into Birmingham from the Black Country, as part of the scheme. Under the scheme, the lights are to be installed near to Lightwoods Park and The Dog pub.

Couple will win a wedding venue

DUDLEY Council is offering a free wedding at its popular Priory Hall in Dudley.

The prize draw will be held at the venue's open day on March 7 where couples will get the chance to win free use of the venue, valued at £350.

Councillor Rachel Harris said: "Our wedding open day attracts couples from across the borough eager to visit our beautiful Priory Hall venue, pick up tips and get inspiration for their big day."

The open day runs from 10am to 4pm.

Workshops help out-of-work men

JOBLESS men in the borough are being offered advice and support on how to cope with unemployment.

Social enterprise Forward for Life is delivering an eight-week programme of workshops on behalf of Dudley Council's office of public health.

The free half-day workshops will cover mental health awareness, confidence building, promoting self-esteem, suicide prevention, self-care and wellbeing. For more information call 07585776800.

Police museum role for professor

HISTORIAN Professor Carl Chinn is to be the patron of the West Midlands Police Museum.

He has agreed to be ambassador of the museum at Sparkhill police station following the death of former patron Lord Knights.

Chiefs are hoping Professor Chinn's inspirational style will help modernise the museum, which charts the history of West Midlands policing from 1839.

A&E targets are hit at Russells Hall

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital has once again bucked the national trend by hitting Accident & Emergency targets. There were 1,809 attendances at the hospital's A&E unit last week and 96.8 per cent within four hours, one of the best figures in the country.

The Dudley hospital has repeatedly hit the target in recent months.

Speedy warning

WARLEY MP John Spellar has welcomed calls for all speed cameras to be painted yellow.

He has backed the call from Labour's transport spokesman Michael Dugher.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



I ASSUMED Boris Johnson was trying his hand at comedy last week when he penned a stirring column warning that a Labour government would strip Britain's armed forces and leave us defenceless. How can you not respond with a hollow laugh, looking at the wasteland of defence left by this Tory government? Twenty thousand fine British soldiers have been sacked and the Reserves (formerly the TA) are collapsing before our eyes. I remember years ago an old true-blue, Tory-voting artillery major who served through the Second World War and the Cold War telling me sadly: "We always do better under Labour than the Tories." The theory is that when Conservatives get their hands on the armed forces, the bean-counting instinct takes over but when Labour forms a government, the old working-class patriotism kicks in.

ED Miliband says the Black Country has nothing to fear from joining a combined council with Birmingham. His spin-doctors have obviously not informed him that the proudest boast of any Blackcountryman is "Ar bay frum bloody Brum." (I am not a resident of Birmingham).

SO Labour is going to get a grip on tax dodging. The snag is that, while there will always be a small percentage of millionaire families (the Milibands of Primrose Hill, for example) who use clever, and entirely legal, strategies to keep their tax liabilities to a minimum the biggest form of tax dodging is the sort used a million times a day by small businesses. "Knock a few quid off for cash?" asks the customer, and the plumber/window cleaner/electrician gladly agrees. Now, the tradesman may be using cash payments to dodge VAT and income tax. Or he may simply prefer cash because it saves him the bother of taking yet another cheque to the bank. So over to you, Messrs Miliband and Balls. How do you sort the bona-fide from the fiddlers? The Balls answer is for customers to demand a receipt for work done. So that's higher prices for the customers, more paperwork for traders, battalions of tax inspectors to monitor every bank account and crawl over every scribbled receipt, and, presumably, some penalty on customers who don't keep their receipts. Is that what the two Eds want? If so, let us know so we can get the house rewired or painted before the General Election.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Taxi drivers may strike over delays in retests

TAXI drivers have vowed to go on strike over a row with council bosses involving delays at a Dudley testing centre.

Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Drivers Association say its members are being forced off the road due to waiting times.

MoTs can be carried out at any garage but more specific checks to ensure taxi safety must be done at Dudley Council's garage in Brierley Hill.

The council recently moved from a single bay testing facility in Netherton to one capable of seeing two cars at the same time in Narrowboat Way. But if vehicles fail tests, drivers claim it can be three days before they can secure a retest, losing them income while their car is off the road.

Taxi driver Abrar Munshi, aged 33, from Stourbridge, says he lost up to £300 after having to rebook a test when his vehicle failed for a faulty headlight and brakes.

But he says after taking his car to a garage to be repaired, they gave the car a clean bill of health – and when it was retested by Dudley Council's own inspectors it passed having had no work done to it.

Mr Munshi, who works for Falcon Cars in Stourbridge, has made a formal complaint to the council about the issue.

"I have lost confidence

By Andrew Turton

in the tests," he said. "This is costing us money. I have made an official complaint to the council."

Association chairman Shaz Saleem said: "We are going to have a meeting but we may have no choice but to go on strike. If the council can't handle the number of cars then we must be allowed to use independent garages."

Dudley councillor Rachel Harris, who oversees taxi licensing, said: "Our priority is that the taxi and private hire vehicles in the borough meet the highest standards to ensure passenger safety."

"For that reason we want all vehicles to go through our MoT testing facility in Brierley Hill, where we have worked closely with Vehicle and Operator Services Agency and other agencies to put in a testing regime, using automated technology, that is consistent."

Bulldogs rescued from fire



Firefighters with two of the rescued dogs at Halesowen

THREE bulldogs were rescued from a blaze at a house in Halesowen, where firefighters discovered a cannabis factory.

The canine trio, including two puppies, were carried to safety from the property in Green Lane.

Emergency services were alerted after passersby saw smoke coming from the ground floor window and heard barking from inside the house. When the noise stopped they became concerned for the dogs' safety and rang 999. Firefighters from Haden Cross forced their way into the property and found the dogs.

The fire was contained to a bedroom at the front of the house and was extinguished by two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus. West Midlands Police said six cannabis plants were found in the same upstairs bedroom.

Watch Commander Justin Bayliss said: "Two bulldog puppies were rescued. A fully grown bulldog, who had been quite aggressive, was also rescued."

Police are not treating the fire as suspicious and continue to make enquiries."

Step in the right direction for health

PEOPLE looking to improve their fitness can borrow pedometers from libraries in Dudley to help them step towards fitness.

It is hoped the scheme will encourage residents to walk more or take up jogging.

The scheme is part of Dudley Council's Let's Get campaign which promotes healthy lifestyles.

It has been spearheaded with the launch of a website where people can find information on exercise and nutrition.

The site gives each user the chance to form and track their own tailor-made healthy living plan to suit their own goals and lifestyles.

Active

Cabinet member for health and well-being on Dudley Council, Councillor Rachel Harris said: "A recent study from the University of Cambridge has concluded that around 676,000 deaths occur in the UK every year due to inactivity."

"The Let's Get campaign is helping people of all ages and abilities to be more active in Dudley borough."

Pedometers are available from all borough libraries.

For more information on healthy eating and physical activity in Dudley visit the www.lets-get.com website.

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Shingles vaccine is urged for the elderly

OLDER residents are being urged to vaccinate themselves against shingles with a free vaccine.

The vaccine is being offered at GP surgeries throughout Dudley to residents aged 70, with a catch-up vaccination available for those aged 78 and 79.

Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by the reactivation of the same virus that causes chicken pox in children.

While it can affect all age groups, it tends to affect people more as they get older, especially over the age of 70.

Councillor Rachel Harris, Dudley Council's cabinet member for health, said: "For most people, shingles can be a mild infection with good recovery, but for others it can be very painful and uncomfortable."

"The vaccine reduces the risk of getting the illness, but for those who do get it, their symptoms may be milder and the illness shorter than if they weren't protected."

"If you're 70, 78 or 79, and you haven't already been vaccinated, please get in touch with your GP surgery to make an appointment."

Those aged 71 should have received the vaccine last year and those aged 72-77 will be offered the vaccine over the next few years.

£211m to refurbish the borough's council housing

THOUSANDS of council homes across Dudley are to be renovated as part of a planned £211 million investment programme.

There will be revamped central heating systems, replacement windows, kitchens and bathrooms as part of a package of upgrades for rundown council properties rented by the borough's 23,000 tenants.

More than a quarter of the money – £61.7m – will be spent improving empty properties to ensure they can be re-let.

By Rob Cox

And more than £23m will be spent on the outside of properties including the replacement of around 10,000 windows each year.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, cabinet member for housing, said: "As the biggest provider of secure tenancies in the borough and as a landlord we are committed to investing in our properties to make sure they have heating, adequate windows as well as modern kitchen and bathrooms."

Commitment

"This investment in our housing stock shows our commitment to the very best council homes. We are responding to the fact that many people are struggling and we are looking to agree a freeze for council tenants."

Councillors are set to approve the plans this week.

A report states £17.1m will be invested to improve

the efficiency of central heating and provide more affordable heating in 4,675 homes in an attempt to reduce fuel poverty.

Nearly £15m will spent re-roofing homes to ensure they remain sound and watertight with work to include the use of energy efficient materials.

A total of £13.4m has been set aside for adaptations for those living with disabilities including level-access showers, stair lifts, vertical lifts and ramps.

Internal improvements such as plastering, replacement floors, new kitchens and bathrooms will take up £11.2m of the budget.

The five year proposals also include plans to spend £38.8m on building around 350 council homes. A total of 99 homes constructed on six sites in 2012 were the first council housing to be built in more than 20 years.

Kai the fire dog is a Twitter sensation



West Midlands Fire Service dog Kai is seen out testing his skills at Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley

HE is the daring dog who keeps thousands of people entertained on Twitter. But two-year-old Kai is not all about adorable pictures and messing about with his canine pals, Pep and Ellie.

The Belgian shepherd has a serious job to do — sniffing out the causes of fires across the West Midlands and attending some of the biggest blazes to rock the region.

As part of his on-going training he is often taken out to tackle the obsta-

cles at Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley.

Kai has been qualified with West Midlands Fire Service for a year and been to more than 40 scenes across the Black Country, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire. This included the large blaze at Stag Industrial Estate in Bilston last November.

His role is to assess the possibility of an arson attack, or to completely rule out such a cause, having been trained to find signs of flammable liquid.

Kai is the responsibility of dog handler Mat Dixon, who is part of the West Midlands Fire Investigation Team, and came from a rescue centre in Telford.

Mat regularly shares Kai's adventures on Twitter, where more than 2,000 people follow him along with Pep, a German shorthaired pointer aged six and Labrador springer spaniel Ellie, now 13.

To follow their exploits follow @WMFireDogs on Twitter.

Boards to tell of link with Titanic

THE history of the anchor for the ill-fated ocean liner Titanic, which was forged in Netherton, is to be showcased under plans for new display boards.

Dudley Council wants to place two information panels at open space near to the 16-ton anchor replica in Netherton.

Officials said the first panel will detail the history of the original anchor commissioned for the ill-fated ocean liner in 1911 and forged by Netherton firm Hingley.

The second will detail the story of the replica, which was created for a Channel 4 documentary.

Both panels will be placed on two identical sculptures modelled on an anchor windlass, the device used on a ship to wind in the anchor itself.

Extra cash for old buildings

MORE than £1 million is to be pumped into restoring historic buildings in Dudley.

The town is to be awarded Heritage Lottery funding to allow the second phase of the Dudley Historic Core Townscape Heritage Scheme to begin.

It is one of only 13 towns to be selected for funding.

Nearly £3m has been spent so far as part of the project to rejuvenate old buildings. Restoration work has been carried out on buildings including the old Co-Op in High Street, Baylies Hall in Tower Street and Old Crown Inn.

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Humps are 'obscene' waste of cash

ARE speed humps the most obscene waste of council cash?

With the disgraceful state of our roads and pot holes knocking our cars tyres and suspensions about why are councils wasting money by constantly repairing the speed humps along Common Road, Wombourne?

Should it be considered that as the humps are constantly being damaged by cars bumping over them, is any equal damage also being done to the cars as well as the humps? The question needs to be asked why do the Common Road humps need so much repair?

In my opinion the humps are still too high and should be removed — not repaired. When I originally opposed the Common Road humps they were sold to the public as 'speed cushions' not humps. Larger vehicles and 4x4s don't even have to slow down for speed cushions/humps as they are wide enough to pass over cushions/humps without touching them.

There are better and cheaper ways of controlling vehicle speeds that don't cause the misery of such humps and don't burden the taxpayer the cost of endless repairs.

About 100 years ago the rubber pneumatic tyre was invented to improve the ride quality of cars. If the council must still have speed humps, they should start to replace the hard tarmac humps with the softer rubber humps that may save on repairs and damage to cars. Also if councils must put large obstacles in the middle of roads, why not make them the bright yellow colour that is normal used as a warning colour for maintenance vehicles, etc?

G E FANTHOM
Swindon Village

Climate is left too late

MY wife used to work for a trade association and for many years she was dealing with a scheme regarding 'climate change'.

The object of this was to make industry aware of the problems facing the world due to the discharge of undesirable elements into the atmosphere. This scheme was run fully with co-operation of the Department of the Environment.

She has been retired now for 11 years and only now have the Government clowns woken up. Cameron, Clegg and Miliband are saying that 'we must do something'.

Having said that, if the rest of the world do not play ball, the problem will not be alleviated.

P COLE
Kingswinford

Plaza sad loss

LET us hope Dudley Hippodrome can be rescued. What a tremendous pity that next door's magnificent Plaza cinema was demolished.

RT SLIM
Halesowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Hypocritical defence for hunting foxes

IN response to B Smithe's letter regarding the reintroduction of fox hunting, I can appreciate how he/she would feel that it would be a good thing. There cannot be a much more distressing experience for a child than to find their pets have been killed. The description of a fox on a child's pram was almost enough to change my own point of view.

That was until I remembered that hunting is a singularly ineffective way of controlling the fox population. I would hazard a guess that more foxes are killed in a single night on roads across the UK than killed in a season's hunting.

This was a sport which needed a fox population, presumably this is why it took place during the winter. That gave foxes time to give birth and raise their cubs. It is only because we are not comfortable these days with the idea of pleasure from seeing an animal ripped limb from limb that it has to be dressed up as the control of vermin. In fact, disturbing foxes in their natural environment is more likely to drive them into urban areas. If fox hunting is reintroduced let it at least be for creating jobs in rural areas, or simply because dashing about the country side on horseback is great fun, because to argue that it makes any meaningful impression on the fox population is hypocritical nonsense.

S CLARKE
Stourbridge

Rich dodge tax as the poor suffer

IT is hard to believe that this Coalition Government haven't pursued the multi-millionaires who have not paid the tax that they should have.

It was reported that there were 7,000 who have not paid their full share of tax, the HM Revenue & Customs has only looked into 1,000 cases out of 7,000 and only prosecuted one person.

If all these people had been pursued the total amount of tax collected would have resulted in £34 billion. This would have gone a long way to have solved our debt problem and would have eliminated most of the austerity cuts that this coalition have put on the less well off and the disabled in this country.

We shouldn't be surprised should we. Some of these people fund the Conservative Party. Ed Miliband has promised a review on the HMRC if Labour get into power.

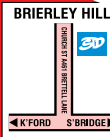
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Ray and Lin Gilbert from the Black Country Echoes Festival at Wolverhampton Art Gallery



John Bulmer's iconic Tipton at Dawn, which was displayed



The old Blue Bird toffee factory in Halesowen in the 1960s, highlighted in the festival



A Mander's artefact discovered as part of the festival



John Meadows with his 1958 FriskySport at the event launch

Visitor numbers hit magic million to see echoes of Black Country life

WITH events at 25 venues staged by 250 volunteers, it was billed as one of the most ambitious history projects the Black Country had ever seen.

And now organisers have revealed more than one million visitors flocked to the Echoes Festival since it was launched in September last year.

Art exhibitions, reunions, history fairs and drama performances were among the events held throughout the region.

Of the one million visitors, at least 12 per cent were from outside the Black Country – which bosses say has boosted tourism. And around 30 per cent were first-time visitors to the venues. Festival co-ordinator Deb Slade said: "We certainly pulled a lot of exhibitions and events together, 27 exhibitions and 87 events in all, and supported over 25 venues to theme their programming."

A focus of the festival was the area's rich

MEMORY LANE

Report by Adam Burling

manufacturing heritage, with some 1,560 workers gathering at 100 workshops to share their memories.

Anecdotes were documented by the team of trained volunteers, and will be posted in an online archive being created. Mrs Slade said photographs, stories and audio recordings will be gathered on the website to ensure the festival has a lasting legacy.

Among the highlights was the Making of Mordor event at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, which explored how JRR Tolkien's image of Mordor was influenced by the region's industrial landscape.

Volunteer Roy Gilbert, a 63-year-old retired teacher, helped create the display using more than 1,000 saplings. Mr Gilbert and his wife Linda spent nearly 100 hours working on the festival between them, running a stand at the Himley Hall Vehi-

cle Show, researching the Joseph Dixon saddlery firm in Walsall and interviewing former workers. Organisers say a total of 25,000 volunteering hours were spent on the festival, which would have cost more than £300,000 if they were being paid.

Mr Gilbert said: "It has been a real success and everyone I have spoken to has taken a lot from it. It has taught me things about the Black Country that I had no idea about and I'm so glad I was a part of it."

Two of the smaller venues' exhibitions were extended as they proved so popular.

Unseen

In The Leather at Walsall Leather Museum featured images of the current state of the old leatherworks buildings in the borough, while also capturing the people who worked there through previously unseen photographs. Black Country Echoes: In Pictures at The Light House attracted people of all ages with its images of residents, landscape and industry from the 1960s to 90s. Classic vehicles drew crowds at nine

events with Bean cars, Turner, Doretti, Guy Motors, Jensen, Sunbeam and Villiers among the manufacturers on display.

Aldridge Airport celebrated the 1950s with a display of historic vehicles attended by 400 people, while 700 fans of the 1960s got an insight into the mod culture at Wednesbury Museum.

Some striking 1970s leather fashion was on display at Walsall Leather Museum, with jackets, skirts and dresses by Walsall-based 4 U Fashion, which was started by Arthur Fox and his wife Joan.

Factories that were once renowned by people across the country were also remembered, with the Blue Bird toffee factory in Halesowen the source of many stories.

And hundreds of artefacts came to light in recent months, each giving a glimpse into the industrial and cultural history of the Black Country. Items previously belonging to the Mander family were uncovered, including sports trophies and shields – and they will be kept by the museum to be displayed in future exhibitions.

ADVERTISEMENT

A CHAMPION for denture wearers, Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS(Eng) has spent more than ten years campaigning to "break the taboo over false teeth and prove that high-quality dentures can indeed be nothing short of life-changing."

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, he says the palette of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great, with traditional, high-quality handmade-on-the-premises prosthetics; suction diaphragm dentures; and implant-retained over-dentures.

"People have come to us with ill-fitting teeth, sunken cheeks and

pinched lips and we have been privileged to transform their looks, providing teeth that not only are aesthetically pleasing and hugely functional, but also successfully support facial structures just like their real teeth once did. It can take years off people."

Can dentures ever be glamorous? "Emphatically, yes," adds Steven.

Strident advances in technology, improved materials and revised clinical procedures are all helping "to drive the denture revolution forward and indeed introduce a real sense of natural-looking glamour to what can be accomplished," he says.

Revolution
in denture provision

Suction solution *is this the answer for you?*

A CUTTING-EDGE development that helps to resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353, who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley, and other clinics across the region, says the invention has the potential to resolve all-too-common denture stability issues.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, says: "In recent times we have seen, what I can describe only as strident clinical steps forward, with implant-retained over-dentures, 'teeth-in-a-day' implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into main-stream dentistry. "We also have clever injection moulding



The Ultra Suction system is available for both upper and lower dentures.

technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and our clinical solutions have never been so appealing.

"Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference. The Ultra Suction

prosthetics system offers a possible alternative clinical solution.

"The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the right patient excellent denture retainer qualities without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work."

Lower dentures can often be troublesome when stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion – all part of the natural ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, can be a regular source of embarrassment.

Reduction

Steven adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can improve speech and taste."

"We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another 'tool' in our commitment to always try to deliver outcomes greater than patient expectations."



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Recruitment starts for 1,000 Grand Central jobs

RECRUITMENT has started for more than 1,000 jobs at the new Grand Central development in the centre of Birmingham.

Grand Central is due to open in September and construction has just begun on the final phase of the major new retail and dining destination above the transformed New Street Station.

A mixture of retail, hospitality and customer service roles are available and training providers are now preparing local candidates for jobs set to be on offer.

Shilpi Akbar, co-chairman of Birmingham Growth Alliance Partnership and assistant director for employment at Birmingham City Council said: "With over 1,000 jobs being created at Grand Central, this partnership is committed to reflect Birmingham's diverse community and showcase the skills of Birmingham's jobseekers."

Anchored

"Our work to date has been to develop and co-ordinate high quality training across the city in the customer service, retail and hospitality sectors to ensure unemployed people have access to the range of job opportunities which will arise from Grand Central."

Grand Central Birmingham will be anchored by a 250,000 sq ft John Lewis shop, one of the retailer's biggest outside of London, which will be providing more than half of the jobs available.

Richard Brown, Grand Central development director said: "We want to ensure that the opportunities created by the new development are accessible to all and benefit Birmingham."

"The investment John Lewis has made to Birmingham further supports



An artist's impression of the completed Grand Central station in Birmingham

the growth of the city and maximises the opportunities available for local people to work for a leading premium retail brand."

Many local people, including a number of apprentices have already been involved in the construction of Grand Central and New Street Station.

The Grand Central Jobs Roadshow will be going live this month, with community events across the city promoting employment and training opportunities. Events will be taking place in all 14 Jobcentres across the

city, as well as at community venues and city centre venues.

Jobseekers wishing to apply for training and job opportunities at Grand Central need to register with the National Careers Service. More information and contact details for the National Career Service can be found at <http://dev.grandcentralbirmingham.com/get-in-touch/recruitment/>

To apply for a role, register for job alerts or find further information about jobs at John Lewis jobseekers can visit <http://jljobs.com/>

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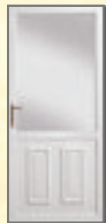


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Magical memories of daring showman

HIS death defying stunts wowed thousands — earning him the reputation of being the Black Country's own Harry Houdini.

Tributes have been paid to magician and illusionist Vic Odin, from Stourbridge, who has died at the age of 76. The entertainer's dare-devil act involved being suspended by a rope and escaping from a straitjacket while dangling upside down.

The daring trick helped launch his career travelling the world as an escapologist with the help of his stage assistant and wife Louise. Friend Ray Hingley, who helped establish the Black Country Night Out, said: "He was like the Black Country's Harry Houdini. He was always a true professional and a great performer."

Mr Hingley first met the magician in 1968 when he walked into his pub the Robin Hood at Brierley Hill, which was cleared for Merry Hill shopping centre car parks.

The pair got chatting as Mr Hingley ran the Citizens Theatre at his pub. It was the start of a long friendship, which would see Mr Odin often perform at the pub's theatre. Later Mr Odin appeared on Opportunity Knocks, the TV talent show.

The 76-year-old died at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley on February 8 after a heart attack. He also had lung cancer. His wife for 60 years, Louise, died in 2007.

Crowd in fits of laughter for Tommy tribute show

IT was bittersweet but there were still plenty of hearty luffs as more than 700 fans paid their respects to Black Country comedy legend Tommy Mundaon at a concert held in his honour.

People packed into the funny-man's favourite venue, Brierley Hill Civic Hall, for the event, which was organised by the late comic's friends in the showbusiness community.

The tribute to Tommy, who died last year aged 80, the sell-out concert was also held to raise funds for Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice, which helped care for the comedian during his battle with Parkinson's Disease.

Officials from the charity said it was expected to raise in excess of £10,000 for the hospice with more than 750 tickets sold.

Stage

Among the acts who took to the stage were Alan 'Aynuk' Smith, Barry Smith, Marlene, Maggie O'Hara and Doug Parker, who had all shared a stage with Tommy in the past.

Members of the Halesowen comic's family, including his widow Val, attended the event.

Mrs Mundaon said: "The whole family misses Tom more than words can say. For myself and all his family and friends who are coping with his loss we take enormous comfort knowing the level of support and care he received at the hospice.



Val Mundaon watches the show at Brierley Hill where Black Country entertainers remembered Tommy



Yow've gorra luff — Alan 'Aynuk' Smith was among those telling Tommy's favourite jokes



Black Country comedy legend Tommy Mundaon



Comedienne Marlene performs a tribute to Tommy

The concert was originally scheduled to take place at Dudley Town Hall but had been moved following problems with the ceiling.

"I've been telling people I think Tom had a hand in that so the concert could be held here in Brierley Hill instead," said Mrs Mundaon.

Compère Mel Thomas got the show started with a tribute to the comic, which revisited many of Tommy's favourite gags.

Singer Maggie O'Hara, who performed and helped to organise the event, said: "I asked Val if she wanted us to organise something as a thank you to the hospice.

"Everyone is delighted with the

success of the show. It has been a great tribute to Tommy and the number of people here show the esteem he was held in.

"Performing has been a bittersweet experience because he would have been here, not only making audiences laugh but us behind the scenes as well."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rents for market traders are frozen

RENTS for traders on Dudley Market will be frozen for the fourth year in a row to help boost business in the wake of the major town centre revamp.

Dudley Council says it has no plans to increase fees for the 'foreseeable future' despite needing to make savings of £27 million during the next three years.

It comes as work continues on a £6.7m redevelopment of the historic market place in Dudley High Street. Traders are due to move to their new stalls as part of the 74-pitch market next month.

They have been using temporary pitches in other parts of the market place and Stone Street Square at busy times since the redevelopment work started.

60 homes on the way at former tip

PLANS to build 60 homes in Tividale as part of a new canalside development have been revealed.

The scheme is proposed for land at the rear of existing properties off Tipton Road alongside the Gower Branch Canal.

Developer Cameron Homes Ltd believes the former refuse tip is the ideal location for a development of two-bed flats and three and four-bed houses.

A total of 54 properties would be available on the open market with six reserved for social and intermediate rent.

Access would be from Palmerston Drive and there would be 146 parking spaces and 60 cycle spaces. Sandwell councillors will consider it on March 11.

HOLIDAYS 2015	
Monday 2nd March	Llandudno, St Kilda Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment and Dancing, 5 DAYS £235
Monday 9th March	Eastbourne, Haddon Hall, Excursions, Entertainment and dancing, 5 DAYS £229
Monday 16th March	Torquay - Howden Court Hotel, 60's themed week, Excursions, Entertainment, 5 DAYS £209
Friday 20th March SOLD OUT	Mystery 3 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 3 DAYS £99
Sunday 29th March	London 5 Star Waldorf Hotel - HOTEL TOUR, Drop off at Harrods for shopping, breakfast, 2 DAYS £135
Good Friday 3rd April	Torquay, Nethway Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 4 DAYS £185
Monday 6th April	Bournemouth, Ullswater Hotel, Easter week (NEW) Excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £249
Monday 13th April	Llandudno, Hydro Hotel, Excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £219
Monday 20th April	Perranporth, Ponsmere 'Hotel on the beach' Excursions, entertainment, stunning views 6 DAYS £335
Monday 27th April	Paignton, Hotel Bonair Esplanade, Excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £229
Monday 4th May	Weymouth, Fair Haven Hotel, excursions, en-suite rooms, entertainment 5 DAYS £239
Friday 8th May	Torquay, Nethway Hotel, Excursions, entertainment 3 DAY £109
Sunday 10th May	Torquay, Howden Court Hotel, Excursions, entertainment and Dancing 6 DAYS £289
Monday 11th May	Llandudno Queens Hotel, Excursions, entertainment and dancing 5 DAYS £275
Monday 18th May	Bracklesham Bay (NEW) South Downs holiday village, excursions, entertainment and dancing 5 DAYS £229
Saturday 23rd May SOLD OUT	Mystery 2 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 3 DAYS £79
Sunday 24th May	London 5 Star Waldorf Hotel - HOTEL TOUR, Drop off at Harrods for shopping, breakfast, 2 DAYS £135
Tuesday 26th May	Tenby (NEW) Belgrave Hotel, excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £279
Saturday 6th June	Babbacombe, Hotel de la mer, excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £259
Saturday 6th June	Porthcawl, seabank hotel, excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £265
Monday 15th June	Skegness (NEW) Savoy Hotel excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £279
Saturday 20th June	Isle of Wight, The Trouville Hotel, Sandown, Excursions, ballroom and entertainment 7 DAYS £389
Saturday 27th June	Mystery 2 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 3 DAYS £79
Monday 29th June	Ilfracombe (NEW) Imperial Hotel, excursions, entertainment, 5 DAYS £265
Saturday 4th July	Eastbourne, Haddon Hall Hotel, excursions, entertainment and dancing, 8 DAYS £430
Monday 13th July	Morecambe & The Lakes, Auckland Hotel, excursions, entertainment and dancing 5 DAYS £265
Saturday 18th July	Paignton, Hotel Bonair Esplanade, excursions, entertainment, 8 DAYS £379
Friday 24th July	Torquay, Nethway Hotel, Excursions, entertainment 3 DAY £109
Saturday 1st August	Mystery 2 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 3 DAYS £79
Sunday 2nd August	London - 5 Star Waldorf Hotel - HOTEL TOUR, Drop off at Harrods for shopping, breakfast, 2 DAYS £135
Friday 8th August	Torquay, Nethway Hotel, Excursions, entertainment 8 DAY £375
Saturday 22nd August	Isle of Wight, Burlington Hotel, excursions, entertainment, half-board (5 course evening meal) 8 DAYS £399

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Friday 4th September	Torquay, Nethway Hotel, Excursions, entertainment 3 DAY £109
Monday 7th September	Llandudno Queens Hotel, Excursions, entertainment and dancing 5 DAYS £279
Saturday 14th September	Babbacombe, Hotel de la mer, excursions,entertainment 5 DAYS £269
Monday 21st September	Lytham st Annes, Lindum Hotel, Excursions, entertainment, 5 DAYS £275
Monday 28th September	Eastbourne (NEW) The Hadleigh Hotel, excursions, entertainment, 5 DAYS £275
Saturday 3rd October	Bognor Regis (NEW) Royal Norfolk hotel, excursions, entertainment, 5 DAYS £225
Saturday 10th October	Mystery 2 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, 2 DAYS £79
Monday 12th October	Scarborough, Red Sea hotel, excursions, entertainment 5 DAYS £269
Monday 19th October	Blackpool illuminations, Cam-brae hotel, excursions (tour of the lights) entertainment 5 DAYS £209
Monday 26th October	Paignton - Turkey & Tinsel, Hotel Bonair Esplanade, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £235
Monday 2nd November	Lytham St Annes Turkey & Tinsel, Lindum Hotel, Excursions, entertainment, turkey tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £259
Monday 2nd November SOLD OUT	Weymouth - Turkey & Tinsel, Carlton Hotel, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £245
Saturday 7th November	Mystery Turkey & Tinsel 2 day ??? Where will we be? Hotel, Excursions, Entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 2 DAYS £79
Monday 9th November	Eastbourne Turkey & Tinsel The Hadleigh Hotel, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £285
Friday 13th November	Torquay - Turkey & Tinsel Nethway hotel, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 3 DAYS £109
Monday 16th November	Torquay - Turkey & Tinsel Nethway hotel, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £235
Thursday 19th November	Sidmouth - Turkey & Tinsel (NEW) Kingswood Hotel excursions, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £299
Monday 23rd November	Tenby - Turkey & Tinsel, Clarence House Hotel, excursions, entertainment, turkey & tinsel festivities 5 DAYS £279
Monday 30th November	Llandudno - Turkey & Tinsel St Kilda hotel, excursions, entertainment and Festivities, arrival drinks, scones and cakes 5 DAYS £275
Monday 30th November	Falmouth - Turkey & Tinsel (NEW) Madeira Hotel, Excursions, entertainment and festivities 5 DAYS £249
Thursday 10th December	Thursford Spectacular - Excursion 3 star hotel, 3 course dinner, Thursford, tickets included 3 DAYS £209
Wednesday 23rd December	Tenby - Christmas (NEW), Belgrave Hotel, Excursions, Full Board, Christmas festivities, entertainment, 5 DAYS £425
Wednesday 23rd December	Babbacombe - Christmas, Hotel De la Mer, excursions,entertainment full board, Christmas festivities, 5 DAYS £425
Sunday 27th December	Torquay - Twisman Nethway Hotel, excursions, entertainment, happy hour each night, 4 DAYS £159
Wednesday 30th December	Llandudno, New Year, St Kilda hotel, excursions, entertainment, full board (6 course meal) arrival drinks, sandwiches, scones & cakes, 4 DAYS £379
Wednesday 30th December	Babbacombe - New Year, Hotel de la mer, excursions, entertainment, New year festivities, 4 DAYS £299

FUN, FRIENDSHIP & LAUGHTER...ON THE MOVE!!!

Carer, 19, stole from elderly woman's purse



Sheryvone Brooks is caught on camera stealing from the 85-year-old she was supposed to care for

THIS is the moment a carer was caught on camera stealing cash from the elderly woman she cared for.

Sheryvone Brooks looks around as she reaches into a drawer and grabs a purse belonging to 85-year-old Evelyn Nicholson.

She was caught after a camera was installed at Mrs Nicholson's home, in Stourbridge, by Brooks' employers when concerns were raised by the pensioner's family.

Brooks, aged 19, of Sedgley, pleaded guilty to stealing £30, at Dudley Magis-

trates Court. The images show Brooks, of Foxmeadow Close, Sedgley, pocketing the cash and putting the purse back in the drawer.

Mrs Nicholson's son Robert Smith said his mother had not known the money had been taken and was extremely upset when she was told.

"When she found out it was devastating for her," he said.

"It has badly affected her health. Since this has happened she has been in hospital and been receiving respite care. Understandably it has shaken her. It was a massive betrayal of trust from someone who was supposed be caring for her."

Mr Smith said his mother had told him if Brooks had simply told her she was struggling for money she would have given it to her.

"That is the kind of person my mother is," he said.

Mr Smith said the family had been 'very angry' when they realised what had happened.

Brooks will be sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court next month.

Magistrates were told Brooks admitted what she had done and was remorseful.

A spokesman for Gateway Health and Social Care Dudley said Brooks had been dismissed.



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A ROCK festival will be taking place on May Day weekend in Cradley after metal music enthusiast created got the idea which stemmed from his 50th birthday celebration plans.

The Mayday Meltdown will host 16 bands across two days with Saturday being the heavier metal side, with Enemo-J headlining.

Shaun Roberts, who turns 50 on the opening day of the festival on May 2, said: "The idea started when I was with friends, Alison and Tommy Strix, discussing putting on a rock and metal night. It just snowballed from there."

Classic rock band The Mighty Wrath will headline on May 3.

The festival is at Wilson Hall at the Windmill Hotel, Colley Gate. Day tickets £7, weekend £12 or £8 on the door. Call 07988070104.

Park and ride to stay open

THE park and ride facility will remain open while a new £1.9 million bus and rail station is built in the heart of Cradley Heath.

The Cradley Heath Interchange will open this spring.

It is being paid for using cash from a £10m pot to improve public transport in and around Merry Hill shopping centre.

Building work is starting on new toilets with areas for families with children and disabled passengers.

FOCUS ON CRADLEY & CRADLEY HEATH

Market traders looking forward with optimism

A TROUBLED market which was saved from closure after it was sold last year has been given a "new lease of life", according to its new manager.

Keith Hampton, aged 43, has taken over as boss at Cradley Heath market.

Mr Hampton, from Foxdale Drive, Brierley Hill, said the sale will breathe new life into both the market and Cradley Heath itself.

Mr Hampton, a former bingo caller, said: "Everybody is really positive. All of the stallholders are looking forward to the future."

"When I first arrived, lots of people were very negative because things had been down for so long, everything was up in the air and nobody was sure what was going on."

"The market has been given a new lease of life and we are going to do what we can to get it back to the way it was before."

The market went up for auction last year at a guide price of £600,000, but originally failed to sell. Then London-based Oyster Properties snapped it up in November, on behalf of a group of private investors, for just £450,000.

Dean Norton, from Oyster Properties, who is originally from Kingswinford, said the market was a long term investment, and will continue to serve the town as a mar-

By Charlie Benton

ket, instead of being torn down or converted.

Although the firm has not revealed its long term plans, Mr Norton said the main aim will be to revamp the market and bring it to a modern standard to make it more attractive to shoppers.

The surrounding shop fronts will also be rented out. Work is due to start soon with the aim of having it completed next month.

"We really do want to get the market back up to standard and make it a place where people actually want to go and shop," Mr Norton said.

A special relaunch event will be held on March 7 to celebrate the improvements taking place.

The market is attracting traders with a new stall opening at least once a week, added Mr Hampton.

Apprentices lend a hand in churchyard



Construction apprentices from firm Carillion donated their time to begin repairing the brick surrounds of graves

CONSTRUCTION apprentices were given hands on experience when they were offered the chance to lend a hand in the restoration of a church graveyard.

St Peter's Church in Cradley has been undergoing an extensive clean-up of its churchyard, which revealed several graves, including some war graves.

Last week a team of apprentices from construction firm Carillion do-

nated their time to begin repairing the brick surrounds of many graves.

Reverend Katryn Leclézio, Vicar of St Peter's, said the apprentices had been a huge help in continuing the clean up and improvements.

"The first group came along in November half-term and began to clear the churchyard," said Rev Leclézio. "Another group returned this half-term and were working very hard until they were rained out. They will have to

come back and finish the work off but it looks very good."

Removing brambles had revealed several brick graves needing restoration. "They were very hard workers," she said. "Without this sort of expert help we would not be able to accomplish our goal of restoring St Peter's Churchyard and making it safe for people to wander about enjoying the stillness and visiting graves of personal and historical interest."

Pub group plan more meetings

THE Friends of Haden Cross Inn will hold a meeting next month.

The group, fresh from their victory over proposals to build a Co-op on the pub's car park, have said they will continue to meet as a group.

Haden Cross Inn, in Cradley, has now been classified as an Asset of Community Value, which means the Co-op will not be built and should prevent similar schemes at the site. However, the group say they have not yet had it in writing.

Chairman of the group, Tim Haskey, said: "We will continue to hold our meetings."

"We welcome anyone who is experiencing a similar situation who wants to come along and get some advice."

The meeting will take place at the pub on March 10 from 7.30pm.

High Street venue to open

A NEW pub is set open in Cradley Heath, with work taking place to convert a former Essentials store.

The first pint is expected to be pulled at the Blackcountryman Pub in High Street next month.

Drinkers will be able to buy real ales brewed locally along with ciders and lagers at low prices.

The company's first pub was opened at the former Laurel, in Stourbridge Road, Brierley Hill, on December 1.

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Barging around the canal network

Book Review

BRITAIN'S prosperity was largely due to its canal network, more than three thousand miles of waterways linking the cities, towns and ports with coalfields, quarries, foundries and factories.

These were the veins through which flowed the lifeblood of the Industrial Revolution, fuelling the growth from innovative, hard-working nation to global empire.

From the beginnings of canal building in the mid 1700s, through the boom days of early Victorian Britain to the inland navigations' current status as a major heritage leisure resource, the 'cuts' are a key aspect of Britain.

The official companion to a new eight-part ITV series, **Barging Round Britain** (hardback, published by Michael Joseph, £20), written by **John Sergeant** and **David Bartley**, is a handsomely illustrated book that celebrates this network's history. It is also available as an ebook.

In his introduction genial Toby Jug-like journalist Sergeant suggests there is something very British about the way we cherish our canal network. Today there are actually more craft on the canals than even during their industrial heyday.

The veteran broadcaster explores eight of the best of the most celebrated waterways, from the Caledonian in the far north to the Kennet and Avon in the West Country.

It can be claimed that the story of the canals began in Staffordshire in 1766, where the first sod was cut by Josiah Wedgwood in what was to become the Trent and Mersey Canal. This was so the Burslem-born industrialist's pot-



Barging Round Britain is a book to accompany the current TV series



Veteran journalist **John Sergeant** explores the country's waterways

tery could be transported more safely than on rutted roads that tended to leave his goods as useless shards.

But, of course, the very heart of the canal network is here in the West Midlands with the Birmingham Canal Navigations taking pride of place, which Sergeant describes as 'the best of Britain'.

Rivals

In a fascinating chapter on the Birmingham Canal Company and its rivals, the story is told of how the waterways spread through 'the city of a thousand trades' and the Black Country, to tap natural resources in Staffordshire (chiefly coal).

The canals brought in the raw materials and then transported out man-

ufactured goods that were in demand around the world, from pots and pans to guns and chocolate.

Such colossal characters as Matthew Boulton and James Watt, John 'Iron Mad' Wilkinson and James Brindley, are involved in a story with more than it's share of intrigue. The greed of early shareholders siphoning off profits that should have been spent on improvements even reached the ear of King George III.

There was also a feud between the Birmingham canal bosses and Lord Dudley over high tolls and the business-minded aristocrat's plans for the Dudley and Stourbridge Canal, so vital for the glass industry and vital for the development of the Black Country.

Leon Burakowski

Express & Star

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COMPETITION

All sewn up! Crafty chance to bag tickets

SEWING for Pleasure, Fashion Embroidery & Stitch and Hobbycrafts returns to the NEC, Birmingham from March 19-22.

This popular show is attended by more than 30,000 creative craft enthusiasts over the three show days. With more than 300 exhibitors, a host of experts and inspiring catwalk shows, this event is not to be missed.

And the organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to give 70 lucky readers the chance to win a pair of tickets.

The International Craft and Hobby Fair is thrilled to be able to offer three shows for the price of one at the NEC.

With many fascinating stands, talks, demonstrations and features, they are a haven for anyone with a passion for all things craft.

For those who truly enjoy sewing for pleasure, the aptly-named show should

be the first port of call. It offers the latest supplies, ideas and innovations. Visitors can find kits, patterns, fabrics, threads and hands-on activities.

Knitters from across the UK saw their hard work and efforts unveiled in 2014, when the world record was set for the longest-knitted chain which measured a staggering one kilometre long.

The Sewing Club, now a regular feature at the show will see author and sewing expert Laura Strutt running mini workshops for beginners.

Fashion Embroidery & Stitch is the ultimate showcase for anyone with a love of stitch and the textile arts and the daily catwalk fashion shows will showcase a range of exciting creations.

Hobbycraft lovers can enjoy a variety of demonstrations and workshops including the lively on-stand demos.



Enjoy watching the catwalk

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Four days departing August 28

- ★ **PRICE FROM** **£299**
- Return coach travel
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Two days departing June 27

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Two days departing May 23 and Oct 3

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London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe.

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There are two options travelling by coach from which to choose, Saturday Night Theatre or a Theatre Weekend with Dinner.

The Saturday Night Theatre break, from £139.95, includes a ticket for the evening show, whereas the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option starts from £149.95 and includes an evening meal following the matinee performance.

Both trips include return coach travel, a choice of theatre ticket from an extensive list of shows, overnight bed and breakfast accommodation in an outer-London four-star hotel, along with some free time in the capital for shopping or sightseeing.

Pick-ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*From price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure/web page for details.

Single room supplements apply.

Organised by Omega Events (ABTA Y590X)

Secret Gardens of the Lake District

Four days departing June 26



- ★ **PRICE FROM** **£259**

The breathtaking scenery of the Lake District is a highlight for all visitors, but tucked away amongst the lakes and mountains, this region is hiding some lovingly tendered gardens.

Travelling to Windermere the first visit is to Brockhole Gardens, an ornamental terraced garden at the foot of the Langdale Pikes. Planted in the early 20th century by Thomas Mawson, it is listed by English Heritage as being of special historic importance and is a wonderful mix of flowerbeds, woodland and meadow.

Windy Hall is a four acre fell side garden with species of rhododendrons, magnolias and hydrangeas. There is also a quarry garden with Japanese influences, a kitchen garden, an alpine area, wildflower meadow and waterfowl garden here. Admire the borders and avenues of the walled garden and the beds of the rock garden plus a wonderful variety of mature trees at Holehird Gardens, also the home to three National Collections of ferns.

At Brantwood House explore the rooms and admire the paintings and furniture before stepping outside into the eight unique gardens where ferns, azaleas and rhododendrons are a particular feature.

And finally head to Levens Hall to explore the stunning ten acres of gardens which include the finest, oldest and most extensive topiary garden in the world, plus an ancient orchard, rose garden, fountain garden and willow labyrinth.

INFO

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- Visits to Brockhole Gardens and Holehird Gardens
- Cruise on Coniston Steam Yacht Gondola
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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)



Police air service to shut its base at Halfpenny Green

New Black Country crime novel is a hit



Author Angela Marsons from Brierley Hill with her crime novel, about a gruesome Black Country murder

AN AUTHOR from the Black Country has seen her debut crime novel shoot to number four in pre-order book charts. Angela Marsons, of Brierley Hill, has written *Silent Scream* about the gruesome murder of a Black Country headmistress that puts her detective Kim Stone on the trail of a serial killer with a history of slayings that span decades.

A former security manager at Merry Hill shopping centre, Miss Marsons described her female police officer character as brash and rude, but also caring and vulnerable.

"I just thought the setting of the Black Country was perfect for the personality of the lead character. I am proud of this area and its industrial past," said the 47-year-old former Heathfield High School pupil. "It was just so totally unexpected where the book has got in the charts. I just never ever expected this kind of response," she added.

Her book is being published by Bookouture and is available via Amazon.

Town's running club for women seeks beginners

A NEW 10-week beginners running course designed for women is starting in the Black Country on April 21.

The latest course from Dudley Ladies Running Club is intended to encourage more local women, of all ages and backgrounds, to get fit by taking up running.

The club was originally started in 2002 and today the youngest member is aged 18 and the oldest is well over 65.

The members come "in all shapes and sizes", according to the club's website, including housewives, career women and students.

At its peak in the summer, the club has around 200 members, and new recruits are joining the club all the time.

The group will meet to train each Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Wombourne Leisure Centre, in Ounsdale Road, Wombourne, from 7.30pm.

The new members will be taught about running safely and the right clothes to wear and footwear.

The course aims to get the beginners running a minimum of three miles. Some have even gone on to run the London Marathon.

Further information is available from Rita Vanes on (01384) 832168 or from the club's website at www.dudleyladies.co.uk

THE National Police Air Service (NPAS) which provides air support to forces throughout the UK is to close its base at Halfpenny Green Airport.

The airport, near Stourbridge, will cease NPAS operations after Government funding cuts prompted changes to the service.

Halfpenny Green, near Bobbington, is one of 10 of 25 bases set to close nationally over the next two years.

It means the nearest police helicopters will be based in Birmingham as of January 2016.

Under the new system, there will be 15 bases in England and Wales, all controlled from headquarters in West Yorkshire.

NPAS bosses say the move will help the service make 'substantial financial

By Peter Madeley

savings' while improving 'efficiency and effectiveness'. The service has already made savings of £11 million in the last year.

West Midlands Police, West Mercia Police and Staffordshire Police will continue to share the service from Birmingham following the closure of the base at the airport known officially as Wolverhampton Halfpenny Green.

The accountable manager for NPAS, Chief Superintendent Ian Whitehouse, said: "NPAS needs to find further substantial financial savings with a target of 14 per cent of revenue cuts over the next three years. This is on top of the 23 per cent savings already made."

"Local police forces facing similar savings are looking at how they rationalise their estate and ways of op-

erating and NPAS is no different in this regard.

"There is no easy way of doing this and difficult decisions have to be made. The National Police Air Service Strategic Board therefore decided to move to the 15-base model. This move will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and mean that every base supports police forces 24 hours a day. It is a move based on an analysis of potential threat, risk and harm to the public we serve."

Mr Whitehouse added that there will be no reduction in the number of aircraft, although it will see four fixed-wing aircraft form part of the 23-aircraft fleet. The fixed-wing aircraft, which will be based at East Midlands Airport, are cheaper to fly than helicopters.

E-cigs ban for those looking to adopt under-5s

COUNCILS in the Black Country will not allow people to adopt children if they are using e-cigarettes, even after quitting smoking actual cigarettes.

Despite experts saying 'vaping' poses little or no threat to children in the home, authorities are refusing to place under-fives with users.

In Dudley, Wolverhampton Sandwell and Walsall, people who wish to adopt a pre-school age child have to have given up any kind of smoking for at least six months.

But it comes at a time when demand for care services is soaring and councils are being forced to cut services in order to afford

to look after vulnerable youngsters.

On the website Adoption in the Black Country, funded by the four borough councils, a section on smoking reads: "We have a duty to consider the effects of smoking on children in their care and will not usually place pre-school children (around five or under) or those with a heart or chest/respiratory complaint such as asthma, with people who smoke or use electronic substitutes."

"Where prospective adopters wish to adopt children from the aforementioned groups, we ask that prospective adopters have given up smoking and have not smoked for a period of six months or longer."

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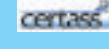

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Texas celebrating 25 years of music

Album Reviews

By Leon Burakowski

GLASWEGIAN band **Texas** celebrate their silver anniversary with an album that reworks their biggest hits and includes four new songs.

One of those new tunes, *Start A Family*, sets the soulful standard on **Texas 25** (Pias) with a tender vocal from Sharleen Spiteri and a lush arrangement glowing with Hammond organ and slide guitar. *Black Eyed Boy* is reinvented as a Motown stomper, *Say What You Want* has fatter bass and horns, *Halo* and *Inner Smile* are given southern soul makeovers, while *The Conversation* gets a voodoo vibe.

When *We Are Together* finds Sharleen emulating Diana Ross on a Supremes-like revamp.

Their best known song, *I Don't Want A Lover*, is funkier on these New York-recorded *Truth & Soul Sessions* whilst keeping the signature slide guitar. *Summer Son* is given a reggae-like lilt plus lots more Hammond and echo.

Of the new songs, *Are You Ready* is the weakest but is pleasant enough with its surf guitar and sing-along chorus. *Supafly Boy* is pure 60s with a Sliced Tomatoes-like backing. *Say Goodbye* echoes both *Say What You Want* and *AI Green's* back catalogue.

If these revamped versions make you nostalgic for the originals, among the various formats of album from February 16 is a double CD pack containing the original hits too. Expect a stripped back, semi-acoustic approach when Sharleen and her boys present *An Evening with Texas* at Birmingham Symphony Hall on April 19.

London siblings **Kitty, Daisy and Lewis** Durham return with *The Third* — yes it's album number three — exploring a diversity of retro stylings, of-



Sharleen Spiteri, singer with Texas, who have given their repertoire a revamp

ten with harmonica to the fore on this Sunday Best release. Highlights include bluebeat chugger *Baby Bye Bye*, Kinks-like opener *Whenever You See Me*, the bluesy *Good Looking Woman* and Imelda May-ish rockabilly number *It Ain't Your Business*, all produced by former Clash guitarist Mick Jones.

Jazz singer and pianist **Diana Krall** reworks several modern standards and personalises them in her restrained style that remains somewhat minimalist despite lush production on new album *Wallflower* (Verve).

Songs getting the Krall treatment include *California Dreamin'*, *Desperado*, *Superstar*, *I'm Not In Love*, *Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word* and *Don't Dream It's Over*. There are a couple of star duets, Michael Bublé joining

Krall for a version of Gilbert O'Sullivan's achingly sad *Alone Again* and *Feels Like Home* with Bryan Adams.

The key track is a new Paul McCartney song, written for Krall, with the former Beatle in full-on romantic mode for *I'll Take You Home Tonight* which sounds like a lost *Wings* classic, which she gives due gravitas.

She will be kicking off her UK tour at Birmingham Symphony Hall on September 28.

Despite a sexist sleeve, that was par for the course in the 70s, **The Best of Cerrone Productions** (Because) is a hugely enjoyable glitterball of 70s disco from the stable of ace French producer Marc Cerrone.

This 36-track double set involves more panting than in the average marathon, lots of pulsating electronics and decadent strings, and bland choral singing, under Cerrone's own name and various pseudonyms/protégés. Cerrone and Italian counterpart Giorgio 'I Feel Love' Moroder practically invented disco and their flamboyant sounds remain an epitome of ridiculous hedonist fun.

All We Are are a trio who met at university in Liverpool but hail from Ireland, Norway and Brazil, and on their eponymous debut album they demonstrate a kind of aloof cool that could appeal to fans of London Grammar and The XX. Released by Domino, tracks such as *Stone* and the more upbeat *Honey* have an icy allure.

No Romeo is the belated debut album from Nottingham singer **Indiana** (AKA Lauren Henson), losing momentum with it being released by Epic several months after her synth pop hit *Solo Dancing*. There is depth here, dark subjects explored on songs such as *Play Dead* and *Blind As I Am*, from an electronic artist closer in spirit to James Blake or PJ Harvey than typical dancefloor fodder. Seek this if you like Portishead or London Grammar.

Emotional rollercoaster a must see

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, **Grand Theatre** DON'T be put off by the title. A friend saw a flyer for it and thought it sounded boring. How wrong can you be!

This multi-award winning play is anything but. Heart-wrenching, heartwarming, absorbing, intense and an emotional rollercoaster, but no way boring. It leads us with a vice-like grip — not a pin could be heard — on an emotional, and often very traumatic,

journey with autistic teenager Christopher who is determined to solve the mystery of who killed the neighbour's dog.

For a 15-year-old not used to human contact — he hates to be hugged — and having never gone further than the end of his street his venture into London on the train and tube to find his mother, who he had previously believed was dead, is momentous. This role, played superbly by Joshua Jen-

kins, gives an insight into the world of an autistic youngster, struggling with social and emotional contact but an absolute genius at maths and problem solving.

Leading us through the story is his special-education teacher Siobhan, played by Geraldine Alexander, who acts as an intermediary between Christopher and the audience. If you missed it you can catch it in the summer at Birmingham Hippodrome. SA

Folk duo in intimate cafe gig

Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman
The Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

YOU have to hand it to husband and wife team Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman, they are so professionally relaxed when they perform you would think they were at home practising.

The couple opened the gig at the intimate venue in King's Heath with Child Owllet, the single from their new album *Tomorrow Will Follow Today* which is driving this tour.

Roberts has a voice full of life and emotion and Lakeman knows how to work around and under it perfectly with his guitar, which was suffering slightly from being doused in champagne at a wedding the day before.

They revel in traditional tunes and enjoy indulging in ribald songs such as *The Blacksmith* and Roberts does have a definite saucy grin on her face as she sings them.

Roberts is not just a voice though, she also exercised her talents on the keyboard, as a flautist and clarinet player. **DF**

REVIEWS



The Jigantics, from left, Rick Edwards, Marion Fleetwood, Martin Fitzgibbon, Mark Cole and Lyndon Webb

Jiggery folkery with flawless fun music

The Jigantics
The Woodman Folk Club, Kingswinford

THE Jigantics, pronounced Jig-antics rather than gigantics, are an entertaining band. Individually they are impressive musicians and as a group even more so.

However, it could be argued they need to decide whether they are going to be a band with a lead singer or a group which concentrates on being instrumental.

This is not in any way to demean the efforts of Marion Fleetwood, Mark Cole or Martin Fitzgibbon who

all sang on the night with varying degrees of success, but respectively they are much better fiddlers, accordion/harmonica players and drummer/percussionists. There was a rather a lacklustre version of the great bluegrass song, *Man Of Constant Sorrow*, where the music was much better than the singing.

They provided an enjoyable mixture of cajun influenced music, bluegrass, blues, country and folk and their musical performances are flawless and full of life.

Danny Farragher

Dancers in perfect harmony

Moving Stateside, **Birmingham Hippodrome** BIRMINGHAM Royal Ballet's repertoire of short ballets do not fill the theatre like the classics and fairy tales. But they are the best way to see this gifted and versatile ensemble stretching themselves, figuratively and literally.

Moving Stateside had a loose American theme.

Opener *Serenade* had choreographer George Balanchine's signature grace and elegance. American choreographer Jessica Lang's *Lyric Pieces*, inspired by Scandinavian folklore and Grieg's piano music, saw an impish Maureya Lebowitz and expressive Mathias Dingman make an impression, as did pianist Jonathan Higgins. The best was saved for last. Twyla Tharp's *In The Upper Room* was pure energy, the dancers whirling out of the smoky background in perfect harmony with propulsive, hypnotic music composed by Philip Glass.

Birmingham Royal Ballet stage Coppélia until Saturday.

Leon Burakowski

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Welsh songbird in Symphony double

ONE of the world's most popular classical-pop crossover artists, Welsh mezzo-soprano Katherine Jenkins, is in concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall next weekend with concerts on March 7 and 8.

The Neath-born songbird is only 34 but last autumn released her tenth studio album, *Home Sweet Home*, a mix of operatic arias with hymns, show tunes and pop songs.

It's been a remarkable 11-year career for the former choir girl, tour guide and model who received an OBE in 2014 for her charity work.

She has sung in front of thousands at top international rugby and cricket matches, at the Cardiff City versus Portsmouth FA Cup Final, the VE Day anniversary concert, and for Her Majesty the Queen at the 79th Royal Variety performance.

Poppy

Most memorably she helped launch the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal in 2005 wearing a dress made from 2,500 poppies.

Her personal achievements include sharing a catwalk with Naomi Campbell, running the London Marathon (five hours and 26 minutes to run 26.2 miles in memory of her father) and coming second on *Dancing with the Stars*, the American version of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Tickets for her Birmingham concerts range in price from £29.50 to £135 plus fees.

Fairport's Pegg is happy to get back to Brummie roots

Nice and sleazy in 50s Soho

A MAD World My Masters, Jacobean playwright Thomas Middleton's satire on a society obsessed by sex and money, is updated 350 years to 1950s seedy Soho, in a Royal Shakespeare Company touring production that gets a short run at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Staged from tonight (Thursday) until Saturday, this co-production with English Touring Theatre, was one of the hits of the season at Stratford in 2013. It is directed by Sean Foley, who had West End success with *The Ladykillers*, which came to the Grand on tour.

A rude and rumbustious farce with live jazz music, the adapted 'city comedy' pokes fun at the haves and have-nots as a greedy young man aims to get his hands on his uncle's fortune — even prepared to disguise himself as a hooker to do so.



Sarah Ridgeway as Truly Kidman in A Mad World My Masters

By Danny Farragher

FOR most people having a sore throat which makes talking feel like chewing shards of glass would stop an interview in its tracks.

Thankfully, Dave Pegg — now the lynch pin of the seminal folk rock band Fairport Convention, is a talker and, apology out of the way, he immediately enthuses about his home town gig on Friday.

"It's going to be great coming back to Birmingham Town Hall, it's my favourite gig 'cos I'm a Brummie and so is Ric Sanders, so for us it's like going home."

Pegg was born and bred in Acocks Green and Sanders brought up in the Second City. "We were there last year but I couldn't play because I cut a tendon in my finger. I'm playing again this year. It's almost completely recovered."

In two years time Fairport will be 50 and by then Pegg will have been with them for all but the first two — Simon Nichol is the only founding member left.

The current line up of Pegg, Sanders, Nichol, Chris Leslie and Gerry Conway, is the longest the band has had at 18 years and is in the middle of their winter tour promoting their first new studio album for four years, *Myths and Heroes*.

"I think the album is the best one we have made with this line-up."

"Myths & Heroes is not quite a new direction for the band, but it's certainly a more complete view of where the band is at musically, in terms of influences and there's lots of new stuff on it."

"Chris, our multi-instrumentalist, has written most of the material and we've also got songs from our friends Ralph McTell and Anna Ryder, who's from Warwick."

"It's really worked out well, there aren't any so-called filler tracks on it; we don't rush to make albums and we will only put stuff out when we've got what we consider to be really good songs."

Does that explain the four year gap between this and the last studio album?

"Yes," says Pegg with a wry laugh.



Fairport, from left. Simon Nichol, Gerry Conway, Chris Leslie, Dave Pegg and Ric Sanders

How does Pegg explain Fairport surviving this long?

"We packed up in '79 because we thought we were too old. It was when the music business started being run by accountants; it was also the punk era."

"It was a bad idea, we were in our early 30s," he laughs loudly.

"Then we started getting back together because of the Cropredy Festival."

"We still love treading the boards. We all still love doing what we do and we hope we have kept our audience by being OK at it."

Fairport Convention are at the Town Hall, Birmingham Friday February 27. Show starts 7.30pm. Tickets are £24 plus usual booking fee.

Adam Ant is to wear Dirk's old Sox

BEFORE he became a dandy highwayman, Adam Ant was at the forefront of the London post-punk music scene, as exemplified by his debut album *Dirk Wears White Sox*.

Ant became one of the biggest pop stars of the 1980s but his musical career began in 1975 when, as Stuart Goddard, his art school band Bazooka Joe were supported by a new group called the Sex Pistols. Goddard quit his band, renamed himself Adam Ant, went down the Roxy in London's Covent Garden, where he met his future Ants at a Siouxsie and the Banshees gig.

Charming

This led to the dark imagery of the debut in 1979. Then Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren persuaded the Ants to jump ship to become Bow Wow Wow and Adam reinvented himself as Prince Charming.

Adam Ant will revisit that debut album, plus the hits, at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on April 16. Tickets cost £26.95.

It's a Dara date or catch Herring

IT is a big comedy night in Wolverhampton tomorrow (Friday) when Dara O'Brian plays a sold-out Wolverhampton Civic Hall and Richard Herring brings his *Lord of the Dance* Settee show to the Slade Rooms. Hit farce *One Man Two Guvnors*, with ex-East-ender Shaun Williamson, opens at the Grand in Wolverhampton on March 17.

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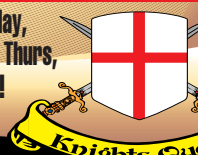
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CHOICE



Will.i.am

The Voice UK (BBC1, 7.15pm)

The blind auditions are complete and the coaches have chosen 12 acts each. Now begins the process of whittling them down by half for the live shows – and that means the return of the battle rounds. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes host as the coaches pair up their acts to perform against each other in head-to-head musical performances. It's then up to Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Rita Ora and Ricky Wilson to decide who to keep and who to eliminate. However, it's not necessarily over for the losers as the coaches have a chance to 'steal' a rejected artist for their own team, giving them a total of seven acts to take into the knockout rounds.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Cooks. (R) **12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v Italy (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Wales (Kick-off 5.00pm).

6.55 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

7.15 The Voice UK. The start of the battle rounds, in which the acts perform in head-to-head sing-offs, leaving the coaches to decide who to take through to the knockouts.

9.15 Casualty. Dixie convinces former drug addict Dave not to give up on himself, or his relationship with his father and son. Connie finds a friend in Alfred, a patient suffering from motor neurone disease who used to be a surgeon, and discovers he is finding life unbearable. Zoe and Max continue their secret fling, but the porter decides he wants everything out in the open. Will a declaration of love do the trick?

10.05 The National Lottery Live. Gaby Roslin presents the Lotto and Thunderball draws, joined by pop star Ella Henderson, who performs her new single Mirror Man and pushes the button.

10.15 BBC News: Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents action from the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Sunderland at Old Trafford and West Ham United v Crystal Palace at Upton Park. United needed three points to boost their chances of a top-four finish, while the Hammers were aiming to do the double over the Eagles. Plus, highlights of Burnley v Swansea City, Newcastle United v Aston Villa, Stoke City v Hull City and West Bromwich Albion v Southampton; National Lottery Update.

11.55 The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Sheffield Wednesday v Middlesbrough.

1.15 Film: Halloween: Resurrection. (2002) **2.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This is BBC Two. **6.15 Film:** School for Scoundrels. (1960) **7.50 Film:** Whisky Galore! (1949) **9.10** Six Nations Rewind. **10.10** The Fred Dibnah Story. (R) **10.40** The Fred Dibnah Story. (R) **11.10** The Nature of Britain. (R) **12.00 A Taste of Britain.** **12.30** Albert Finney: Talking Pictures. **1.00 Film:** The Victors. (1963) Second World War drama, starring George Peppard. **3.30** Africa's Fishing Leopards: Natural World. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** The Wonder of Animals. (R)

6.00 The Great British Sewing Bee. The seven remaining contestants are tested on their ability to add shape and structure to clothing, with their first task involving sewing together 12 pieces of fabric to make a boned corset. (R)

7.00 Flog It! Paul Martin and the team visit Derby, where items up for valuation include a German painting with a moving history, a pair of Disney figurines and a supposed 16-carat diamond ring. (R)

7.45 How We Got to Now with Steven Johnson. The science author examines the stories of the unsung people who made technological innovations in the sphere of cooling and refrigeration. From the heating engineer whose discovery of how to cool homes led to mass migration to previously inhospitable desert areas, to a man who cut ice from a lake and transported it thousands of miles, Steven sees how these inventions had far-reaching and unexpected consequences for creating the modern world.

8.45 Dad's Army. Godfrey learns his cottage is scheduled for demolition to make way for a new airstrip. (R)

9.15 Reginald D Hunter's Songs of the South. The comedian explores the musical heritage of Alabama and Georgia, examining Muscle Shoals' role in the development of soul and visiting the home town of the 852s and REM.

10.15 The Rise of James Brown: Mr Dynamite.

11.55 Film: Brooklyn's Finest. (2009) Three Brooklyn police officers face contrasting personal dilemmas as their careers converge at a single moment. Crime thriller, starring Richard Gere.

2.00 Film: Beauty & the Briefcase. (2010) **3.20** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockers Street. **6.10** Bottom Knockers Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knockers Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **8.30** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. **8.50** Scrambled!: Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Tipping Point. (R) **2.35** The Chase. (R) **3.35** Doc Martin. (R) **4.35** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme.

Weather. **5.45** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Top 100 Holidays. Comedian Harry Hill narrates a countdown of 100 vacation-themed camcorder calamities and viewer-submitted mobile-phone clips. (R)

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The Gordie duo take control of TV presenter Richard Madeley in I'm a Celebrity Get Out of Me Earl, the Supercomputer is in Edinburgh, where locals use hidden talents to win flights to New York, and one lucky member of the studio audience plays to win the contents of a commercial break.

8.25 Take Me Out. Soldier Darian from Hartlepool, para-athlete Tony from Cardiff, animal-rights campaigner Ben from London and hair colour technician Aaron from Haslings all vie for the attentions of 30 single women, intent on capturing their interest and securing a date. However, first they must get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval.

9.40 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined by Hollywood actress Sigourney Weaver, Doc Martin star Martin Clunes, Arsenal legend Thierry Henry, controversial artist Tracey Emin and rapper Kanye West.

10.35 ITV News: Weather.

10.50 Boxing: Frampton Live. Carl Frampton v Chris Avalos. Mark Pougatch is joined by David Haye to present coverage of the bout for the IBF World Super Bantamweight title, from the Odyssey Arena in Belfast.

12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Trans World Sport. **7.00** FIM Superbike World Championship. **7.25** The Grid. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** Frasier. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** Child Genius. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Doncaster and Newbury. **4.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.15 The Simpsons. Homer wins \$1million on the lottery, but keeps it a secret from his family. (R)

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Homes by the Sea. Architectural designer Charlie Luxton travels to the south Devon coast to investigate why it has become the most sought-after place in Britain to have a seaside property. He begins at a cliff-top home near Brixham, before visiting a fisherman's cottage in Lymington.

8.00 The World's Wildest Weather. New series. A visit to a town in South Carolina where it's raining popcorn-like snow – actually little balls of ice called graupel that appear harmless but could trigger avalanches. Storm chaser Geoff Mackley films a dangerous concoction of volcanic ash, rocks, debris and water called lahars, and a man in Newfoundland records footage of a strange, rolling bank of fog that looks like a tsunami. In Canberra, there's a giant tornado born not from a thundercloud but from a colossal firestorm, while in the Peak District, strong winds defy gravity – blowing a waterfall upwards. Previously seen on More4.

9.00 Film: Cuban Fury. (2014) Premiere. A boy's dream of being a champion salsa dancer is shattered by bullies. Twenty years later, he returns to the dance floor as an overweight and under-confident adult, and tries to get his old footwork back in a bid to sweep his boss off her feet. Comedy, starring Nick Frost, Chris O'Dowd and Ian McShane.

10.55 Film: Runaway Jury. (2003) Courtroom thriller, with John Cusack and Gene Hackman.

1.25 The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.30** The Supertv. (R) **5.25** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.35** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **11.30** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **12.30** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.25** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **2.25** Film: Rio Bravo. (1959) Western, with John Wayne and Dean Martin. **5.10** 5 News Weekend. **5.15** Film: Columbo: By Dawn's Early Light. (1974) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk and Patrick McGeehan.

7.10 NCIS. The driver of a Ferrari is gunned down by a motorcyclist and the victim is identified as petty officer Colin Boxer, who was holding down a second job as a valet parker and had borrowed the sports car. The owner of the vehicle turns out to be Vijay Chaya, the billionaire head of a large corporation, and the team suspects a case of mistaken identity. (R)

8.05 NCIS. Part one of two. A navy lieutenant dies after a fight, but the sole witness has post-traumatic stress disorder from his military experiences and his testimony cannot be relied upon. (R)

9.00 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. A call leads DB and the team to descend on an abandoned building, where they find a murder scene with no body that appears to have already had the full CSI treatment. The evidence makes Nick and Sara fear the Gig Harbour serial killer has resurfaced, even though the man found guilty of the murders is currently residing on death row, while Julie believes that Jared's twin Paul may have undertaken a copycat killing in an effort to undermine his brother's conviction.

10.00 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. The detectives call on the help of Dr Warner when the death of a baby from Aids forces Stabler and Benson to crack down on a clinic dealing in bogus medicine. (R)

10.55 Law & Order. A politician is embroiled in a triple murder, but persuading him to reveal the truth is only the first step toward unmasking the killer.

11.50 True Crimes: The First 72 Hours. The case of Newfoundland man Gregory Parsons, who was wrongly convicted of murdering his mother. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** 10.00 BC. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great Movie Mistakes **7.10** Great TV Mistakes **8.10** Top Gear **9.15** Film: Deja Vu (2006) **11.10** Family Guy **1.00** Uncle

1.30 South Side Story **2.00** An Idiot's Guide to Politics **3.00** Great TV Mistakes

BBC Four

7.00 The Secret Life of Elephants **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** Hostages **10.25** Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe **10.55** Spike Milligan: Love, Light and Peace **11.55** Brothers in Arms **12.55** The Kinks at the BBC **1.55** The Secret Life of Elephants **2.55** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **3.55** Close

ITV2

11.15 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **12.40** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **2.35** The Hot Desk: Kelly Clarkson **2.50** The Brit Awards 2015 **5.10** Film: Jurassic Park (1993) **9.40** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.25** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **10.55** Reality Bites **11.40** Ibiza Weekender **12.35** Crazy Beaches **1.05** Hell's Kitchen **1.55** Fake Reaction **2.30** Life's Funniest Moments **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.40 A Touch of Frost **1.55** Wycliffe **3.05** Film: Carry On at Your Convenience (1971) **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.05** Lewis **12.10** A Touch of Frost **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

12.45 Film: Dragnet (1987) **2.50** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **5.35** Film: Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) **7.30** Championship Boxing Live **10.45** Cricket World Cup Highlights **11.50** Film: The Island (1980) **2.10** River Monsters **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Taking New York **12.00** Marry Me **12.30** New Girl **1.30** Melissa & Joey **2.30** Baby Daddy **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **4.30** How I Met Your Mother **5.30** Troy **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: He's Just Not That Into You (2009) **11.35** The Big Bang Theory **12.30** The Inbetweeners **1.35** Rude Tube **2.35** Troy **3.30** 2 Broke Girls **3.55** Suburgatory **4.35** Desperate Housewives

Film4

11.00 Gunman's Walk (1958) **1.00** First Daughter (2004) **3.10** A Monster in Paris (2011) **4.55** Tea with Mussolini (1999) **7.15** The Animal (2001) **8.55** Men in Black 3 Interview Special **9.30** The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2011) **11.25** The Last Exorcism Part II (2013) **1.10** Nosteratu the Vampire (1979)



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CHOICE



Let's Play Darts for Comic Relief (BBC2, 9pm)
Darts players are typically a no-nonsense bunch, so it's not surprising that this new pro-celeb series does precisely what it says on the tin: famous faces play darts, in aid of Comic Relief. They're not thrown in at the deep end of the oche with no training, though – they're helped along their way by a mentor from the world of professional darts. Among those taking part are Richard Osman, who is so tall he's at a distinct advantage – playing darts for him must be like sticking a pin in a notice board at arm's length. Tim Vine, Lee Mack, Roisin Conarty, Bob Mortimer, Liza Tarbuck, Sean Lock and Martin Offiah also compete, and best of all they must each adopt their own 'darts persona' including nickname and walk-on music.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.35 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Sunday Politics. 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 2.00 My Chinese New Year. 2.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v England (Kick-off 3.00pm). 5.00 Songs of Praise. 5.35 BBC News: Regional News: Weather. 6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. The nine remaining amateur artists face three challenges in portraiture on London's Southbank. For the opening task, they are given four hours to create pictures of themselves from their reflections. This is followed by a quick-draw where they have 30 minutes to attempt an anatomically accurate sketch that captures the likeness of a stranger. In their last chance to impress before the elimination, there's a four-hour sitting with EastEnders actor Rudolph Walker and Albert Square legend Pam St Clement. 7.00 Countryfile. The team visits Pembrokeshire to mark St David's Day, with Matt Baker foraging for food and Ellie Harrison heading out to sea in the hope of catching a glimpse of a porpoise; Weather for the Week Ahead. 8.00 Call the Midwife. Two old schoolmates have a less than happy reunion at the maternity home, while Barbara makes a revolutionary suggestion to help Mary Cynthia treat the bedsores of her patient. 9.00 The Casual Vacancy. Tensions rise in Pagford as the election approaches and each side steps up its campaign, while news of a tragedy leaves the whole community reeling. 10.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather. 10.30 Match of the Day 2. Liverpool v Manchester City and Arsenal v Everton. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League matches at Anfield and the Emirates Stadium. 11.35 The League Cup Show. Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur. Manish Bhasin presents action from the final at Wembley Stadium, as the London rivals contested the first major domestic silverware of 2015. 12.15 The Apprentice. 1.40 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.45 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. 6.15 Great British Garden Revival. (R) 7.15 Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) 8.00 Countryfile. (R) 9.00 The Football League Show. (R) 10.20 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.50 The Great Comic Relief Bake Off. (R) 12.50 A Taste of Britain. (R) 1.20 A Taste of Britain. (R) 1.50 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em. (R) 2.15 Three Up, Two Down. (R) 2.45 Hi-de-Hi! (R) 3.15 Flog It! (R) 4.00 Speed Dreams: The Fastest Place on Earth. (R) 5.00 Film: The Tuxedo. (2002) Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan. 6.30 Pompidou. New series. Comedy about a penniless aristocrat who lives with his butler and their dog in a caravan parked in front of his now crumbling estate. With Matt Lucas and Alex MacQueen. 7.00 The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway. Engineer Linda Miller battles to rebuild a Victorian tunnel under the Royal Docks in the East End as part of the Crossrail train line linking east and west London. Meanwhile, the Birmingham attempt to follow in the footsteps of 19th-century father-and-son team Marc and Isambard Kingdom Brunel as they construct a new tunnel beneath the Thames. (R) 8.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson and James May set off on an epic adventure to rescue Richard Hammond from a remote area of Canada. Gillian Anderson is the Star in the Reasonably Priced Car. 9.00 Let's Play Darts for Comic Relief. New series. Gabby Logan hosts a contest in which big names from the world of darts join forces with celebrities in a knockout tournament held at the Lakeside, Frimley Green. 9.50 Film: Cosmopolis. (2012) Premiere. A billionaire driven across Manhattan in a limousine discovers that an unexpected development in the stock market is poised to destroy his financial empire. As his fortune crumbles before his eyes, the real world starts to infringe on his sheltered existence through a series of strange encounters. David Cronenberg's drama, starring Robert Pattinson. 11.30 Film: Genghis Khan. (1965) Historical adventure, starring Omar Sharif and James Mason. 1.30 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) 2.30 Holy City. (R) 3.30 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockout Street. 6.10 Bottom Knockout Street. (R) 6.20 Bottom Knockout Street. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan. (R) 6.45 Dino Dan. (R) 7.00 Animals. (R) 7.10 Sooty. (R) 7.25 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.30 Scrambled! Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled! Nerts & Monsters. (R) 7.50 Scrambled! Ultimate Spider-Man. 8.30 Scrambled! Horrid Henry. 8.50 Scrambled! Deadtime Stories. (R) 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 10.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 11.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 12.35 ITV News: Weather. 12.45 Neil Diamond: One Night Only. (R) 1.55 Catchphrase. (R) 2.40 Tipping Point. (R) 3.40 Film: A View to a Kill. (1985) Adventure, starring Roger Moore. 6.05 Regional Programme: Weather. 6.15 ITV News: Weather. 6.30 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Emmerdale actor Dominic Brunt (Paddy Kirk), dancer and choreographer Wayne Sleep, Royle Family star Ricky Tomlinson and Good Morning Britain's Charlotte Hawkins compete to win thousands of pounds for charity by taking on a trivia expert in a test of their general knowledge. 7.30 Off Their Rockers. New series. Hidden-camera comedy. Seb tries his hand at selling cheap suits, Sonia asks for help with a tricky crossword clue, and Mo wreaks havoc on his mobility scooter. 8.00 All Star Family Fortunes. Celebrity Big Brother winner Katie Price and actor Charlie Lawson, best known as Coronation Street's Jim McDonald, play to win money for charity with the help of their families. 9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry struggles to keep Violet in check, Gordon unwittingly commissions a racy window display, Victor brokers a shady deal and George helps Kitty confront her attackers. 10.00 ITV News: Weather. 10.15 Cricket World Cup Highlights. England v Sri Lanka. Georgie Bingham presents action from the Pool A match at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington. 11.15 Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights of the latest top-flight fixtures, including Northampton Saints v Harlequins, Wasps v Gloucester and Leicester Tigers v Sale Sharks. 12.15 The Store. 2.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 3.15 ITV Nightscreen. 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 How I Met Your Mother. 6.45 How I Met Your Mother. 7.10 How I Met Your Mother. 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Frasier. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch. 12.30 Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. (R) 1.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 2.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 2.30 Film: The Wizard of Oz. (1939) Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland. 4.00 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.35 Channel 4 News. 6.05 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. Laura Hamilton helps a mother and son find a holiday home for the whole family in the Murcia region on Spain's Mediterranean coast, with a cash budget of £70,000. 7.00 Four Rooms. Gordon Watson, Celia Sawyer, Alex Proud and David Somnathal are in hot pursuit of a treasure gifted by Agatha Christie, an Elvis Presley photo album, a biblical ancient relic, a bronze skeleton and an artwork made in space, as they meet members of the public putting their prized possessions up for sale. Anita Rani presents. 8.00 The Auction House. Boss Roger tells art valuer Nick to raise his game and sell at least half his pictures or face the consequences – which include doing yoga with the boss. While Nick searches out new talent, such as an incognito street artist and a cat-loving former glamour model, Chelsea's upmarket clientele are on the hunt for the latest trends – and this week, it's animal skulls. 9.00 Indian Summers. As the Sipri Fair gets under way, the Indian community is allowed onto the grounds of the British Club. Ralph conspires to get Aafin onside by granting him a sought-after promotion. 10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the famous quiz, with team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson joined by guests Andrew Flintoff and Rhod Gilbert. (R) 11.05 Film: Twilight. (2008) Fantasy love story, with Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson. 1.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 2.15 The Million Pound Drop. (R) 3.10 Come Dine with Me. (R) 5.25 Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) 5.30 Face the Clock. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. 6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) 6.20 Angelina Ballerina. (R) 6.35 Pip Ahoy! (R) 6.45 The Mr Men Show. (R) 7.00 Chloe's Closet. (R) 7.15 Only the Little White Van. 7.20 Make Way for Noddy. (R) 7.35 Paw Patrol. (R) 7.45 Little Princess. (R) 8.00 Wanda and the Alien. (R) 8.10 Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) 8.20 Zack and Quack. (R) 8.35 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 8.50 Jelly Jam. (R) 9.05 LazyTown. (R) 9.35 Dora and Friends. 10.00 SpongeBob SquarePants. 10.35 Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) 10.50 The Dog Rescuers. (R) 11.20 The Hotel Inspector. (R) 11.25 The Hotel Inspector. Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. 3.00 Film: Arthur and the Invisibles. (2006) Part-animated fantasy adventure, starring Freddie Highmore. 4.45 Film: Three Men and a Little Lady. (1990) Comedy sequel, starring Tom Selleck. 6.45 5 News Weekend. 6.50 Film: Ghost Rider. (2007) Motorcycle stuntman Johnny Blaze sells his soul to diabolical Mephistopheles to save the life of his father. His bargain dooms him to pass each night as Ghost Rider, a demonic skeletal biker bound to take evil souls to Hell. However, conflict between Mephistopheles and his son offers Johnny the chance to win back his humanity. Fantasy thriller based on the comic-book, starring Nicolas Cage, Eva Mendes and Wes Bentley. Edited for daytime broadcast. 9.00 Film: Total Recall. (2012) Premiere. A man living in a bleak future years after a nuclear war has fake memories of being a secret agent implanted into his brain. However, the procedure uncovers the fact that he really is a spy with his memory erased, and he is forced to become a fugitive from the totalitarian government. Sci-fi thriller remake, with Colin Farrell, Kate Beckinsale and Jessica Biel. 11.15 Film: Twelve Monkeys. (1995) A man goes back in time to investigate a disaster, but begins to think he is mad and has only imagined his life in the future. Sci-fi thriller, starring Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt. 1.50 SuperCasino. 3.10 10,000 BC. (R) 4.00 House Doctor. (R) 4.25 Make It Big. (R) 5.15 Angels of Jarm. (R) 5.40 Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Don't Let the Bride 8.00 The Voice UK 10.00 I Survived a Zombie Apocalypse 11.00 Family Guy 11.45 Uncle 12.15 American Dad! 12.35 I Survived a Zombie Apocalypse 1.35 Bangkok Airport 2.30 South Side Story 3.00 Bangkok Airport 4.00 Close
BBC Four
7.00 The Great War 7.40 Britain's Wild Places 8.00 Mark Lawson Talks to Alexander McCall Smith 9.00 Arts Question Time with Kirsty Wark 10.00 Storyville: The Great European Disaster Movie: Newsnight Debate 11.50 Animals Through the Night: The Great European Disaster Movie: Newsnight Debate 1.50 Synth Britannia at the BBC 2.50 Guitar Heroes at the BBC 3.50 Close
ITV2
12.10 Take Me Out 1.25 Take Me Out – The Gossip 2.05 You've Been Framed! 2.35 Scorpion 3.30 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 4.55 Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) 7.10 Film: Jurassic Park II (2001) 9.00 Ibiza Weekend 10.00 The Keith Lemon Sketch Show 10.10 Film: American Pie Presents Band Camp (2005) 12.20 Film: The Butterfly Effect (2004) 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV3
11.35 Rosemary & Thyme 12.35 A Touch of Frost 2.45 Agatha Christie's Marple 4.50 Inspector Morse 7.00 Lewis 9.00 Sunday Night at the Palladium 10.00 Birds of a Feather 10.35 City Lights 11.35 Lewis 1.30 Countrywise 2.20 Judge Judy 3.05 ITV3 Nightscreen 3.40 Emmerdale
ITV4
11.20 Pawn Stars 2.05 Storage Wars 3.00 Film: Dragnet (1957) 5.10 Film: Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) 7.00 The Big Fish Off 8.00 Premiership Rugby Union 9.00 Film: Pale Rider (1985) 11.25 Film: Buried (2010) 1.20 River Monsters: Untold Stories 2.20 Hogan's Heroes 2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping
E4
12.30 Revenge 1.30 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 2.30 The 100 3.30 The Big Bang Theory 7.00 Film: Transformers (2007) 10.00 The Intebweens 11.05 Ride Tube 12.10 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 12.40 How I Met Your Mother 1.40 Rules of Engagement 2.30 Taking New York 3.25 Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 The Mark of Zorro (1940) 1.00 Home Alone 3 (1997) 3.00 Rio (2011) 4.50 Turner & Hooch (1989) 6.55 Terminal Velocity (1994) 9.00 Shallow Hal (2001) 11.15 Kill List (2011) 1.05 The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser (1974) 3.25 Close

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MONDAY

The Daisy Chain, BBC1, 12.35am
A couple move to a remote village to recover from the death of their baby. They agree to take in an autistic girl whose parents have died, despite warnings from the locals that she is an evil spirit. Horror, starring Samantha Morton and Steven Mackintosh. (2008)

TUESDAY

Cemetery Junction, BBC1, 11.45pm
A young man in 1970s Reading starts to question what he wants out of life, but finds his friends happy with their lot. He starts a new job selling insurance door to door, only to run into an old girlfriend. Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's comedy drama, starring Christian Cooke, Tom Hughes and Jack Doolan. (2010)

WEDNESDAY

Three Fugitives, BBC1, 12.15am
A bank robber resolves to go straight after his release from prison. However, on his first day of freedom, he ends up as an innocent bystander during a heist. When the cops assume he is the brains of the operation, he is forced to go on the run. Comedy, with Nick Nolte, Martin Short and James Earl Jones. (1989)



Gladiator, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

FRIDAY

Gladiator, ITV, 10.40pm
Roman general Maximus Decimus Meridius is a casualty of a power struggle between the corrupt Emperor Commodus and the senate. Ordered to be put to death along with his family, he escapes his would-be killers but is sold into slavery as a gladiator – but uses his fame in the arena to fight against the tyrant. Oscar-winning period epic, with Russell Crowe. (2000)

Papillon, BBC2, 11.35pm

Fact-based drama about a Frenchman wrongly imprisoned for life for a crime he did not commit, who made an extraordinarily courageous bid to escape from the notorious Devil's Island. Starring Steve McQueen, Dustin Hoffman and George C. Scott. (1973)

Dog Soldiers, Channel 4, 12.25am

A run-of-the-mill training exercise turns into a bloodbath for soldiers on weekend manoeuvres in the Highlands. After rescuing the lone survivor of a massacred special forces unit, they are set upon by a pack of werewolves. British horror, starring Kevin McKidd, Sean Pertwee, Emma Cleasby and Liam Cunningham. (2002)

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PICK OF THE WEEK

You can always bank on Stephen to deliver

Crime dramas. They're ten a penny these days, but viewers still can't get enough of them. Broadchurch has only just ended and Midsomer Murders rarely seems to be off our screens, but that hasn't stopped ITV bringing back DCI Banks for its fourth series.

Not that we're complaining. The lead character has been vividly brought to life over the past few years by Stephen Tompkinson, who may not have been everyone's first choice for the role.

Banks was already well established in a series of books by Peter Robinson – but he's made it his own.

"I think the audience admire Banks' integrity and work ethic," says Tompkinson. "He's a no-nonsense policeman and doesn't have any particular quirks.

"Banks is married to his job as a detective chief inspector. He's the type of policeman you'd want on your case as he's a true professional and always gives 100 per cent.

"I think people want a policeman who isn't fanciful in any way if they are

working to seek justice. People want them to do their job to the best of their ability, and Banks is the sort of man you can rely on to do just that."

The first case of the new run involves the murder of an Estonian woman who was buried alive on a piece of waste ground.

She had come to Britain to search for her missing sister who was working as a prostitute, and suspicion falls on the autistic son of her driver.

But while Banks is dealing with this difficult investigation he must also deal with personal issues.

One involves his on/off lover Annie's decision to renew her relationship with an old flame, and the other the death of his mother, which forces him to spend time with Arthur, his estranged father.

"Banks' mother's death comes completely out of the blue for him and his father," explains Tompkinson.

"Banks' brother was also killed in the second series so now it's only him and his father left.

Their relationship isn't the easiest. They have to deal with the shock of

losing her whilst trying to look after each other.

"They have to get to know each other again and it's quite an emotional journey. Banks finds it difficult when Arthur points out his personality defects. At this time in his life he has to think about what he's going to do, and who he's going to end up with."

Does that mean there is no chance of Banks and Annie ever getting back together? Fans would certainly be unhappy at the thought of them staying just good friends forever.

"Annie told Banks she couldn't hang around forever as she has to think of her daughter Isla," smiles Tompkinson. "In this series Annie has moved on and renewed her relationship with David, who is Isla's father. There's not really anything Banks can do about it...

"But watching Annie walk away from him is hard – and whether he acts on that, we'll have to wait and see!"

Andrea Lowe, Caroline Catz, Jack Deam, Danny Rahim, Keith Barron, Polly Herringway, Edward MacLiam, Badria Timimi and Steve Toussaint also star.



Stephen Tompkinson stars in DCI Banks, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY Arthur & George, ITV, 9pm

Think of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the name Sherlock Holmes will no doubt spring to mind. Conan Doyle created the great detective, but led an exciting and intriguing life in his own right – and this three-part drama, based on a Julian Barnes novel, focuses on one aspect of it. It's 1903 and, while mourning the death of his wife Louisa, Arthur finds something to distract him – the case of vicar's son George Edalji, a solicitor imprisoned for allegedly mutilating animals and sending a series of threatening letters. Conan Doyle joins forces with his trusted manservant to clear George's name. Martin Clunes stars as the author, while Arsher Ali plays the unfortunate man he is trying to help.

TUESDAY The Gift, BBC1, 9pm

Peter Miles served six years in prison for his part in a series of armed robberies across Bristol. He turns to Mel Giedroyc to help him find a way of making amends with those he affected. Twenty-six years ago, Pauline Stepney's daughter was born 14 weeks prematurely, and doctors had to fight to keep the baby alive while she was stuck 50 miles away at home. Unable to make regular visits, the

new mum sunk into depression, until a stranger offered to drive her to the hospital every day. Pauline would now like to say thank you for an act of kindness that had a big impact on her life. Last in the series.

Horizon: Secrets of the Solar System, BBC2, 9pm

Planets are now being discovered outside the Earth's solar system on a regular basis, and these strange new worlds are forcing scientists to rewrite the history of how the Sun and the planets, satellites, dwarf planets, asteroids and comets that orbit it came into being. This programme reveals that far from a simple story of stable objects orbiting a star, the development of the Solar System was a potent combination of hellfire, chaos and planetary pinball that makes it somewhat of a miracle that Earth was created at all.

WEDNESDAY Big Star's Little Star, ITV, 8pm

Don't ever work with children or animals – that's the golden rule in telly, they say. But the leading lights behind this superb series understand that actually, it's the

little ones who make the best television – because of their unpredictability. For the producers behind this game show, the youth are comedy gold, as Stephen Mulhern grills them about their celebrity parents and hopes they will spill their deepest secrets. As the series kicks off, Ronan Keating plays alongside his nine-year-old daughter Ali, while Sheree Murphy and her six-year-old daughter Matilda, and Carl Froch and his four-year-old son Rocco also join in the fun. But which of the celebs will be the most fidgety with nerves?



The Great Comic Relief Bake Off, BBC1, 8pm

Ed Byrne hosts the final edition, joined by four more well-known faces hoping to inspire people to get baking for Comic Relief. Comedian and actress Victoria Wood, former Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles, model and TV presenter Alexa Chung and Asylum star Kayvan Novak are the hopefuls, who will be tackling a traybake.

THURSDAY Banished, BBC2, 9pm

Wolf Hall may have finished last week, but BBC Two is hitting us with another prestige period drama that's about more than just corsets and romance. If the involvement of writer Jimmy McGovern, aka the man who gave us Cracker and The Street, doesn't convince you that Banished is going to be gritty, then the premise should. It's set in 1788, in the camp occupied by the first British convicts transported to Australia, and in the opening episode, Elizabeth Quinn (MyAnna Buring) is in trouble for being caught of her dormitory, while James Freeman (Russell Tovey) discovers his already meagre food ration has been stolen.

FRIDAY The Musketeers, BBC1, 9pm

Porthos demands answers from his new-found family after uncovering the truth about his parentage. As he learns more secrets about his past, he begins to question his allegiance to the Musketeers – who in turn harbour suspicions of their own as they process the revelations in their friend's life. Can d'Artagnan and his comrades save Porthos from the dangerous route he seems to be headed down, and can they even be certain of where his loyalties lie?

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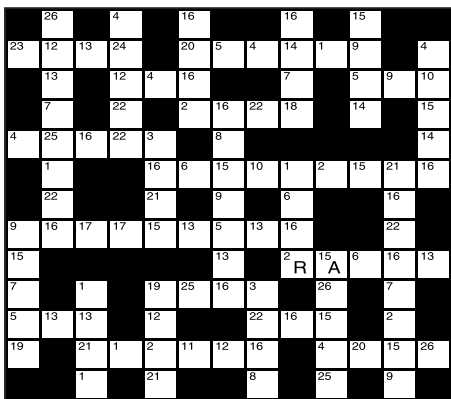
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	R A
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	O	R	F	W	G	E	B	L	O	H	M	A	S
14	U	T	C	D	K	Z	I	N	P	X	J	Y	

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

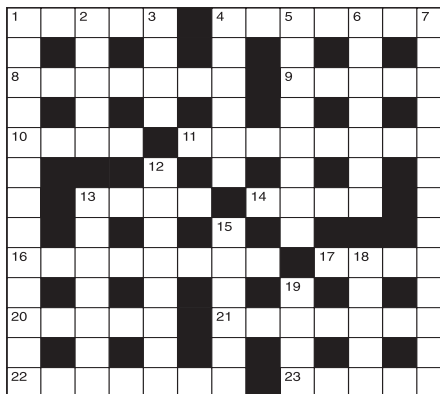
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Acted as a would-be officer (5)
- A faultless rider could still put his foot in it (7)
- New ones may be expensive if stout, perhaps (7)
- A wedge shot that doesn't go straight (5)
- Posh sort of business (4)
- They fight, though they're not boxers (8)
- Written authority for many to strike (4)
- It makes fast speed at sea (4)
- An aptitude to write and sing (8)
- Boast about dress (4)
- A gesture one doesn't care to make (5)
- Notably brisk (7)
- The peace subsequently includes the French (7)
- It's erect, whichever way you look at it (3,2)

Down

- Angry over intentions that may lead to misunderstanding (5,8)
- Do fully (5)
- Tidy haircut (4)
- A better method? (6)
- Taking cover (8)
- Time ran out for such clothing (7)
- Set out to influence the powers that be (8,5)
- Superior neighbour in the U.S. (8)
- Manage a medium agency (7)
- The occupant is at home with his wife (6)
- Not left any entitlement (5)
- Thunderous applause? (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Fat (5)
- Advantage (7)
- Petty (7)
- Lucid (5)
- Destiny (4)
- Half a minim (8)
- Profound (4)
- Extremely (4)
- Marred (8)
- Notion (4)
- Ingenuous (5)
- Shorten (7)
- Voter (7)
- Mirror (5)

Down

- Exasperated (3,2,8)
- Live (5)
- Wicked (4)
- Campanile (6)
- Fine points (8)
- Newly (7)
- Reverse fortunes (4,3,6)
- Dregs (8)
- Rob (7)
- Swordsman (6)
- Play (5)
- Conceited person (4)

Sudoku

2	8			9	5			
	5			4			1	
					5		4	
	9	7	2				6	3
		3		9	6			
1	8				3	2	5	
	3		6					5
		4		5		8		7

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	3	4	2	6	9	8	1	5
6	1	8	4	7	5	2	9	3
5	2	9	8	3	1	6	7	4
4	9	3	1	5	2	7	8	6
8	6	2	3	4	7	1	5	9
1	7	5	6	9	8	3	4	2
9	5	1	7	2	3	4	6	8
3	4	7	9	8	6	5	2	1
2	8	6	5	1	4	9	3	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Intercept; 8 Cock; 9 Put across; 10 Peahen; 11 Donor; 14 Giber; 15 Nuts; 16 Limbo; 18 Ahoy; 20 Chair; 21 Keeps; 24 Matron; 25 Halloween; 26 Esau; 27 Ill-wisher. Down: 1 Scapgoat; 2 Scrapbook; 4 Noun; 5 Erato; 6 Carbon; 7 Pisa; 9 Pearl; 11 Dumas; 12 Run across; 13 Astronaut; 17 Ocean; 19 Yellow; 22 Pawns; 23 Call; 24 Mete. QUICK - Across: 3 Physician; 8 Omen; 9 Unmindful; 10 Spring; 11 Sheen; 14 Admit; 15 Lure; 16 Erase; 18 Long; 20 Error; 21 Drive; 24 Dismal; 25 Burlesque; 26 Onus; 27 Infertile. Down: 1 Constable; 2 Reprimand; 4 Hang; 5 Smith; 6 Cudgel; 7 Abut; 9 Unite; 11 Shape; 12 Nutrient; 13 Heartless; 17 Eerie; 19 Grille; 22 Visit; 23 Turn; 24 Dull.

Quiz

- Who preceded Ronald Reagan as president of the USA?
- Which British football team was the first to win a European trophy?
- What was Wagner's last opera?
- In which card game does a player get one for his nob?
- Which former Tory cabinet minister and General Synod member joined the Roman Catholic church in the 1990s?
- Which literary critic wrote The Great Tradition?
- In which discipline did Nicky Gooch win a Winter Olympic bronze medal in 1994?
- How is deoxyribonucleic acid better known?
- In what type of dance are zapateados performed?
- By what name is the constellation Crux also known?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Bauhaus; 2 Leander; 3 Pitchblende; 4 George Eliot; 5 Jamaica; 6 Sir Stanley Spencer; 7 Spider plant; 8 Copper; 9 United Arab Emirates; 10 Tom Hanks.
Niner: BACHELORS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

43287 gives a wading bird.
623978 gives a small animal,
1289573 gives a wild animal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Departures most weekends

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Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing.

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Pick-up points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.

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Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

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HALESOWEN, Newton Court£725 pcm+Fees
A recently converted 3 bedroom ground floor apartment finished to an extremely high standard and centrally located with commuter links to Halesowen and Birmingham. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, both with fitted wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, 1 single bedroom, 2 extra rooms downstairs, secondary glazing throughout. Allocated parking. Viewings recommended. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Melbourne Road£675 pcm+Fees
NEW PRICE
Within walking distance to Halesowen. Is this 3 story town house. Well worth an inspection inside and set within a quiet cul-de-sac, comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large fitted dining kitchen, very large lounge, downstairs wc, house bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, off road parking for 2 cars and garage, close to local schools and college. EPC: E



ROWLEY REGIS, Fairbourne Avenue£675 pcm+Fees
Perfect for a family and close to the M5. A large Muskov Style detached home which is available now, close to local shops and bus routes. Featuring 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and 1 large single bedroom, 2 good size lounges, large kitchen, downstairs wc, shower room, gas central heating, new windows, huge rear garden, driveway and garage. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place£625 pcm+Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. A superb ground floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, The Pumphouse£595 pcm+Fees
Contemporary fully furnished luxury living. Generous sized lounge with state of the art SKY•HD/TV/DAB chrome sockets, 1 double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, wall mounted LCD/DVD, stunning fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, beautiful bathroom with shower, electric central heating, allocated parking space with visitor spaces, secure ported access phone system, viewing highly recommended. EPC: C



LYE, Chapel Street £595 pcm+Fees
A 3 bedroom unfurnished or part furnished to suit detached property which has been totally renovated to a very high specification and must be viewed to be fully appreciated. This lovely home has entrance hall, 2 reception rooms, breakfast kitchen with all brand new appliances, large downstairs bathroom with shower, extra separate w.c., 3 double bedrooms, gas central heating, maintenance free garden, on road parking. Available immediately. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Mount Street£550 pcm+Fees
An immaculate semi detached house within minutes of Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring gas central heating, spacious living room, modern fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, rear garden and on road parking. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Ladysmith Road£550 pcm+Fees
A mid terraced house in a sought after area for Colley Lane Primary School, bus links to Halesowen and Stourbridge. This house features 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, dining area, new downstairs shower room, 2 good size bedrooms, double glazing, gas central heating, rear garden. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Quarry Hill £550 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished semi detached house with stunning views of Client featuring gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs w.c., 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, off road parking. Available now. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Intended Street£550 pcm+Fees
Undergone a complete refurbishment. Ideal for Colley Lane Primary School and bus links to Halesowen, Cradley Heath and Stourbridge. Featuring 2 large reception rooms, 2 large bedrooms, downstairs bathroom with shower, modern kitchen, off road parking and a garage. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Witton Bank £550 pcm+Fees
A well presented 2 bedroom 2nd floor apartment in a very sought after location. Having secure intercom entry, entrance hall, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, large lounge, kitchen, garage en block and communal gardens. Available immediately. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Meadow Walk£550 pcm+Fees
Modern semi detached house within a popular residential area featuring gas central heating, spacious living room, modern fitted kitchen, downstairs house bathroom, 3 good size bedrooms, large rear garden, driveway parking for 2 cars. Available immediately. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Mill Lane£535 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished mid terraced house, within walking distance to Blackheath Town Centre and not far from Rowley Regis train station, briefly comprising of: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs shower room, 2 double bedrooms. Benefits include rear garden, off road parking. EPC: D



WORDSLEY Cooknell Drive£525 pcm+Fees
Located in the centre of Wordsley and ideal for local buses to Stourbridge and Merry Hill. Featuring gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted dining kitchen, 2 bedrooms, en-suite shower room to master bedroom, house bathroom, rear garden, driveway parking. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street North£525 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished semi detached house within walking distance of Newfield Park Primary, Winsor High School and Halesowen College. This property features 2 reception rooms, 2 double bedrooms both with fitted wardrobes, downstairs bathroom with shower, upstairs shower room, fitted kitchen, gas central heating, double glazing. EPC: E



KIDDERMINSTER, Keats Place£495 pcm+Fees
A well presented 2 bedroom ground floor flat, having accommodation including: hall, lounge, refitted kitchen with appliances, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing and cul de sac location. Virgin Broadband connection is available. Own entrance to the property. EPC: C



TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £495 pcm+Fees
A lovely modern ground floor part furnished apartment, briefly comprising of: 2 bedrooms with wardrobes, spacious lounge with sofas etc, fitted kitchen with appliances, bathroom with shower, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens, internal viewing recommended. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Belgrave Road£450 pcm+Fees
A large ground floor modern apartment within walking distance to Blackheath Town Centre and local buses. Featuring a spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, 1 double bedroom, newly fitted bathroom suite with shower. Gas central heating, small rear garden with private entrance. Available Now. EPC: TBC



ROWLEY REGIS, The Link £425 pcm+Fees
Located close to the M5 J2 is this quiet and spacious unfurnished ground floor apartment, briefly comprising of: electric storage heating, open plan living room/fitted kitchen with white goods, 1 double bedroom with built in wardrobe, house bathroom with shower, parking space to rear. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens£395 pcm+Fees
A modern top floor apartment, in the centre of Old Hill with local bus stop outside and Old Hill train station close by. This apartment comprises of 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, double glazing, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, unfurnished. EPC: C



LYE, High Street £375 pcm+Fees
Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This spacious 2nd floor apartment features a lovely lounge, 1 double bedroom, bathroom, modern and contemporary kitchen/ diner, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. Available now. EPC: E

PROPERTY

Impressive house located in a top postcode area



AN IMPRESSIVE five-bedroomed family home, 'Little House' at Quarry Park Road, Pedmore, Stourbridge, is for sale through The Lee Shaw Partnership at £950,000.

It has a large reception hall with French doors to the garden, a drawing room with feature fire surround, sitting room, a new kitchen, landing with wardrobe storage, master bedroom with en suite bathroom, four further bedrooms, a bathroom with spa bath, shower room, rear garden with extensive patio, ornamental pond, decking with an inflatable pool. Call 01384 396066 or visit www.leeshaw.com



Stunning extended home has the 'wow' factor



DIXONS Blauenwern Dr, Halesowen
































A two bedroom second floor apartment offered for sale with NO UPWARD CHAIN. Comprising: communal entrance, private hallway, lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom, communal gardens and GARAGE en-bloc.
Early viewing recommended 0121 550 7474 **£54,950**

THIS stunning four-bedroomed family home in Tenterfields, Halesowen, with the "wow factor" has been vastly extended and refurbished to a high standard.

It is for sale through Billingham Taylor at offers in excess of £325,000.

Beautifully decorated throughout in neutral, contemporary shades, distinctive features include a spacious entrance hallway with under-stairs storage, a WC, a large open plan kitchen/diner, a dining room, an open plan family room, a utility, a separate sitting room with a bay window, a master suite with a stylish en suite shower room, three further bedrooms (bedroom three with wardrobes) and a luxurious house bathroom. Outside are landscaped rear gardens with decking, a garage and a driveway.

Contact Billingham Taylor on 01384 234900 or visit www.billinghamtaylor.co.uk website.

Cradley Heath  Trejon Road * Traditional style semi-detached House * Kitchen/dining room * Three bedrooms * Extensive rear garden EPC=tb Offers in the region of £149,950	Halesowen  Mansion Court Long Lane * Ground Floor Flat * Re-fitted Kitchen * Living Room * Bathroom * Communal Parking EPC=D Offers in the region of £69,999	Halesowen  Stourbridge Road * Detached bungalow * Good sized garage * Three bedrooms (master with en-suite) * Breakfast kitchen * Conservatory * EPC=D Offers in the region of £299,950	Oldbury  Perry Hill Road * Semi detached house * In need of general improvement and modernisation * Dining room and living room * Three bedrooms * Garage EPC=E Offers in the region of £135,000	Halesowen  Shenstone Valley Road * Semi detached house * Extended living room and lounge * Re-fitted extended kitchen * Three bedrooms * Re-fitted shower room * NO UPWARD CHAIN EPC=C Offers in the region of £174,950	Halesowen  Woodbury Road * Detached bungalow * Two bedrooms * Shower room/wet room * Rear verandah * Side garage EPC=D Offers in the region of £149,950
Brierley Hill  Henzel Croft * Second floor flat * Communal hall * Living room * Two bedrooms * Bathroom * Parking space EPC=B Offers in excess of £90,000	Halesowen  Hoosen Close * Link detached bungalow * Two bedrooms & bathroom * Lounge/dining area * Garage and driveway parking * Part double glazed * Gas boiler heating radiators * Most desirable location EPC=D Offers in the region of £215,000	Stourbridge  Churchill Drive * Tastefully presented semi-detached house * Through lounge with French doors to gardens * Superb fitted kitchen/dining room * 3 bedrooms * Well appointed bathroom * Fitted cloakroom * Utility room * Enclosed pleasant gardens * Extensive driveway parking * A must view property EPC=tb Offers in the region of £139,950	Halesowen  Chantry Drive * Semi-detached bungalow * Two bedrooms, bathroom, lounge, fitted kitchen. * Side garage * Gas boiler heating radiators. * EPC = D Offers in the region of £159,995	Halesowen  Balholm Mucklow Hill * Second floor flat * Three bedrooms * Communal gardens * Good sized living room * Garage EPC=E Offers in the region of £165,000	Dudley Netherton  Cradley Road * Traditional style semi detached house * Lounge/dining room * Kitchen * Fitted Cloakroom * Three bedrooms * Bathroom with corner bath * Large garage * Gas boiler heating radiators, double glazed windows EPC = D Offers in the region of £149,950
Oldbury  Apsley Road * Semi detached house in need of general modernisation * Living room and dining room * Three bedrooms * Garage * Good sized rear garden EPC=E Offers in the region of £149,950	Oldbury  Hawthorn Croft * Semi detached house * Utility area and downstairs wc * Two reception rooms * Three bedrooms * Small garage/store EPC=E Offers in the region of £199,950	Quinton  Lyncourt Grove * Traditional style semi-detached house * Extended Kitchen and living room * Three bedrooms * Small garage * Large rear garden EPC=tb Offers in the region of £209,950	Oldbury  Apsley Road * Extended three bedroom house * Two reception rooms * Fantastic kitchen/breakfast room * Downstairs wc * Single garage EPC=D Offers in the region of £239,950	Oldbury  Pound Road * Semi detached house * Recently re-planned and modified * Kitchen/dining room * Three Bedrooms * Bathroom with shower * Garage EPC=E Offers in the region of £199,950	Brierley Hill  Westfield Road * Detached House * Three reception rooms * Kitchen * Conservatory * Downstairs wc * Three bedrooms * Bathroom with shower * Garage EPC=E Offers in the region of £139,950
Smethwick  Edgbaston Road * Good sized terrace house * Sitting room and living room * Kitchen/breakfast room * Three good sized bedrooms * Good sized rear garden EPC=D Offers in the region of £189,950	Halesowen  The Hide New John Street * Brand new semi-detached bungalow * 2 Bedrooms, shower room * Fitted kitchen with oven and hob * Lounge with French doors to gardens * Double Glazed windows, gas boiler heating radiators * Off road parking for two vehicles * Completion anticipated March/April 2015 EPC=C £135,000	Oldbury  Dog Kennel Lane * Detached house * Fitted cloakroom * Two reception rooms * Study/lobby area * Bedroom one with en-suite * Three further bedrooms * Good size rear garden EPC=D Offers in the region of £349,950	Oldbury Tividale  Gibbet Hill * Split level detached house * Open plan living space * Fitted cloakroom * Four bedrooms * En suite shower room * Utility * Double garage EPC = C Offers in the region of £337,499	<p>Do you live in a leasehold house or flat?</p> <p>If so at some stage you will have to consider buying the freehold interest or extending your existing lease. The fundamental problem will be if your prospective purchaser needs a mortgage and there is less than 70 years available this is likely to affect the saleability and the value.</p> <p>Scriven & Co. can advise you on all aspects of purchasing your freehold or extending your lease to your flat. We may well save you money in the process.</p> <p>For further details contact Kevin Davis MRICS on 0121 506 6961 for an initial consultation.</p> 	
Quarry Bank TO LET  24A High Street * Self contained first floor flat * One bedroom * Good sized living room * Electric radiator heating * UPVC double glazing to windows * Convenient location close to Merry Hill * EPC = F Monthly rent of £265+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Tipton TO LET  9 Old Port Close * Ground floor flat on Canal side development * One bedroom with fitted wardrobe * Open plan kitchen/living room * Double glazed windows * Night storage heating * Car space * DSS considered * Available Now! * EPC=D Monthly rent of £350+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Cradley Heath TO LET  32 Spinners End Drive * Bungalow style flat * One bedroom * Kitchen with appliances * Living room with electric fire * DG windows & Night storage heating * Allocated car space * EPC = D Monthly rent of £365+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Halesowen TO LET  112 Apperley Way * First floor flat having double bedroom * Fitted kitchen with some appliances * Bathroom with shower over bath * GCH & DG windows * Great location on popular estate * Available Now! * EPC=D Monthly rent of £395+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Halesowen TO LET  31A Belgrave Road * Modern end terrace house * Redecorated & improved * 2 bedrooms * Fitted kitchen with oven, hob & hood * Gas boiler/radiator heating system * Side garage * EPC=D Monthly rent of £550+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	Oldbury TO LET  4 Kings Court Apsley Road * First floor apartment * Two bedrooms * Kitchen with host of appliances * Gas heating system & DG windows * Gated allocated parking space * Available late March * EPC=B Monthly rent of £585+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

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- 2 Reception Conservatory Large Kitchen
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HALESOWEN | £170,000

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- Three Bedrooms Separate W/c
- Driveway Garden To the Rear

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QUINTON | £149,950

- Semi Detached EPC Rating D
- Through Lounge/Dining Room Kitchen
- Four Bedrooms Downstairs Bathroom
- Drive To The Front Garden To The Rear

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OLDBURY | £149,950

- Modern Detached EPC Rating C
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Detached Garage Driveway Rear Garden

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OLDBURY | £138,000

- Modern End Town House EPC Rating C
- Lounge-Diner Fitted Kitchen Cloaks W/c
- Three Bedrooms bathroom W/c
- Two Car Drive Garden To The Rear

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OLDBURY | £130,000

- Large End Terrace EPC Rating D
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OLDBURY | £120,000

- Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Dining Room Kitchen
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- Front and Rear Gardens

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QUINTON | £110,000

- Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Dining Kitchen Cloakroom W/c
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Gardens To The Front and Rear

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OLDBURY | £75,000

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WOODGATE | £70,000

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- Open Plan Living/Dining Room Kitchen
- Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Enclosed Rear Garden

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QUINTON | £70,000

- Ground Floor Flat EPC Rating D
- Lounge/Dining Room Fitted Kitchen
- Double Bedroom Shower Room W/c
- Shared Rear Garden No Upward Chain

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OLDBURY | £54,000

- Retirement Apartment EPC Rating D
- Lounge Kitchen 2 Bedrooms Bathroom
- Phone Entry System Emergency Chords
- Non Allocated Secure Parking Area

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OLDBURY | £50,000

- Retirement Apartment EPC Rating C
- Lounge Kitchen Bedroom Bathroom
- Phone Entry System Emergency Chords
- Non Allocated Secure Parking Area

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OLDBURY | £550

- Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D
- Lounge Fitted Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Front and Rear Gardens

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HALESOWEN | £525

- Two Floor Maisonette EPC Rating C
- Lounge Dining Kitchen To Ground Floor
- Two Bedrooms Shower Room Sep W/c
- Garage In A Separate Block.

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- Non Allocated Parking Area
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- Second Floor Apartment EPC Rating D
- Lounge Kitchen
- Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/C
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ROWLEY REGIS | £425

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Harnessing the sun to make cars glow in dark

By James Parker

Nissan has become the first manufacturer to apply glow-in-the-dark car paint to showcase how its market-leading, all-electric LEAF is helping more and more people convert to solar energy at home.

The manufacturer worked with inventor, Hamish Scott, creator of STARPAT, which is a spray-applied coating that absorbs UV energy during the day so that it glows for between eight and 10 hours when the sun goes down.

While glowing car paint is already available, as are glow-in-the-dark car wraps, the bespoke, ultraviolet-energised paint created especially for Nissan is unique thanks to its secret formula made up of entirely organic materials. It contains a very rare natural earth product called Strontium Aluminate, which is solid, odourless and chemically and biologically inert.

Various third-party companies have applied non-organic glow-in-the-dark paint to vehicles before but Nissan is the first car maker to directly apply such technology. Nissan's unique paint, if made commercially available, would last for 25 years.

With running costs of just two pence* or less per mile to run, the UK's 7,500 plus Nissan LEAF owners have reported significant savings and are using the money they save on a wide variety of items; among the more popular of these are solar panels for the home, which decreases the household carbon footprint and means owners are also effectively charging their vehicle for free.

Research revealed recently by Nissan showed that 89% of LEAF owners charge their cars at home overnight. Although solar panels do not store energy or provide it outside of daylight, any leftover power generated during the day is fed back into the national grid and homeowners can get a Government payment for it, meaning that the overnight charge is already paid for.

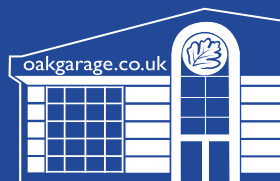
LEAF owner Ian Finch is one of those who has combined the savings offered by running an all-electric vehicle with solar panels to power his home.

"Running the Nissan LEAF costs a sixth of the amount we'd pay to run a diesel or petrol car," he said. "Overall, we are probably using 25% less electricity thanks to our solar panels and it's a fantastic experience to be able to drive the LEAF using electricity that's been produced completely for free."

To hear more on LEAF charging using solar energy, see the full interview with Ian here: <http://youtu.be/xM9XRn1am-qQ>

Nissan Motor GB Limited EV manager, Paul O'Neill, said: "The Nissan LEAF is a shining beacon of sustainability and the future of motoring. Not only is it saving our customers money in running costs but we are now seeing how it is helping people become more environmentally sensitive by reducing their carbon footprint."

See more of Nissan's glow-in-the-dark car by viewing <http://youtu.be/nKj2sEpg1xg>



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13	Suzuki Swift 1.2 SZ2 Grey	Only 9000 Miles	£7,495.00
63	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ Silver	Only 10000 Miles	£12,995.00
11	C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Red	Only 10000 Miles	£10,795.00
61	Micra 1.2 Acenta Silver	Only 10000 Miles	£6,495.00
59	C3 Picasso 1.6 HDI Exc Red	Only 11000 Miles	£7,995.00
61	Gr Modus 1.5 DCI Dyn Silver	Only 11000 Miles	£6,995.00

Citroen

60	C3 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ Black	38k	£6,995.00
57	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Blue	52k	£5,295.00
63	C4 Picasso 1.6 HDI AD VTR+ Grey	25k	£12,995.00
61	C4 G Picas 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Red	27k	£9,995.00
61	C4 G Picasso 1.6 HDI VTR+ EGS Silver	21k	£10,495.00
61	DS3 1.6 DStyle Auto Blue	15k	£8,995.00

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12	Fiesta 1.2 Zetec Silver	18k	£7,995.00
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60	Lotus Evora 4 3.5 V6 +2 Silver	30k	£30,495.00
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Representative Example, C4 G Picasso AO61 JBX, Cash Price £9995 Cash Deposit £100, P/X £1422.73 Total Deposit £1522.73, Balance £8472.27, Acceptance Fee £199, Option To Purchase Fee £199, 48 Payments Of £150 Followed By One Final Payment Of £3081.25, APR 8.5% Representative.



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 <p>07/57 Citroen C4 Picasso 1.6 HDi Diesel VTR+ 7 seater, 71k, Beige, Panoramic Roof, Alloys, CD £4995 / £24 Per Week</p>	 <p>07/07 Suzuki Swift 1.3 GL *ONE OWNER* 47k, Burnt Orange, CD Player, E/Windows £3995 / £28 Per Week</p>
 <p>04/54 Audi A4 Sport 1.9 TDI 130 Diesel Automatic, 72k, Silver, Alloys, Air Con £4995 / £29 Per Week</p>	 <p>05/05 Honda Civic 1.6 Sport 3dr, 83k, Grey Metallic, Alloys, Air Con, CD, E/Windows £3295 / £24 Per Week</p>
 <p>09/09 Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 SXI 5dr, 46k, Black, Alloys, Air Con, CD £4495 / £22 Per Week</p>	 <p>07/57 Kia Picanto 1.1 LS 53k, Silver, *LOW INSURANCE* *ONE OWNER* CD Player £2995 / £17 Per Week</p>
 <p>07/07 Ford Fusion 1.6 TDCi Plus Diesel, 48k, Silver, *ONLY £30 ROAD TAX* *AVERAGE 62 MPG* Alloys £4495 / £22 Per Week</p>	 <p>04/54 Vauxhall Meriva 1.6 Energy 5dr, 74k, Black, Alloys, Air Con, CD £2195 / £17 Per Week</p>
 <p>08/58 Fiat Panda 1.4 100hp 39k, *LOW INSURANCE* Black, Alloys, Air Con, CD £4295 / £21 Per Week</p>	 <p>02/52 Rover 75 2.5 V6 Connoisseur 52k, Burgundy, 2 Owners, Leather, Alloys, Electric Park £1995 / £19 Per Week</p>
 <p>2007/07 Citroen Xsara Picasso 1.6 HDi 92hp VTX Diesel, 57k, Blue Metallic, Alloys, Air Con, CD, E/Windows £4295 / £21 Per Week</p>	 <p>03/03 MG ZS+ 1.8 Stepspeed AUTOMATIC 65k, Green, Alloys, Half Leather, Park Sensors £1695 / £15 Per Week</p>

Finance example: 07/57 Citroen C4 Picasso 1.6 HDi Diesel VTR, Cash Price £4995, Deposit £300, Amount of credit £4695, Fixed interest rate 6.25% Flat rate, 12% APR, 60 Payments of £102.71 (£23.70 per week) Total amount payable £6462.26 (Excludes £150 Document fee and £150 Completion fee, Subject to status)

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Over the years Wolverhampton Mazda has gained an enviable reputation for delivering quality service and workmanship.

The company was founded by Dennis Bunning, a motorcycle racer from Stafford with a collection of more than 90 vintage motorcycles. Dennis spent more than 48 years in the motor industry, owning dealerships holding several franchises.

Now retired, Dennis has handed over Wolverhampton Mazda to his grandson Aaron Bunning. Aaron works closely with experienced dealer principal Roy Tallam, who first joined Dennis at Stafford Mazda in 1999. Together they ensure that all customers gain the best possible service.

Roy prefers to advise customers on which car is most suitable for their particular needs rather than simply sell them a car. This means that customers buy a car they'll enjoy owning and which matches their lifestyle.

Connections with motor racing are strong at Wolverhampton Mazda and this drives the team's enthusiasm and passion for everything they do. When visiting you'll see a rare display of AJS Motorcycles, all made in Wolverhampton. It makes each visit to Willenhall Road a truly unique experience.

This independent family-run business employs a team of friendly staff, with many involved in motorsport, and sharing the company's enthusiasm for its motorsport heritage.

Roy Tallam says: "Why not give us a call, get a quote, book your car servicing and where possible, we'll offer free collection and delivery around Stafford, Stone, Eccleshall, Penkridge, Rugeley, Cannock, Hednesford and Wolverhampton WV1."

Pictured: Aaron Bunning with grandfather Dennis Bunning and Roy Tallam

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✓ **Bumper scuffs**

✓ **Kerbed alloys**



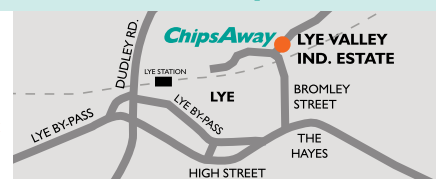
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The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. All rentals include VAT. Visit your local Suzuki Dealership for other payment options on the entire range of Suzuki vehicles. Suzuki Personal Contract Hire is a trading style provided by Lex Autolease Ltd registered in England and Wales number 1090741. Registered office: 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HN. Applicants must be over 18 and a UK resident. Ownership of the vehicle remains with the finance company and the vehicle must be handed back at the end of the term. The offer above is available from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. The Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. This offer is available from 1st January 2015 to 31st March 2015. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to Suzuki Financial Services.



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1

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2

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4 berth, single axle, fixed bed, end bathroom, wet central heating system, microwave, solar panel, alarm, motor mover, extras include Astex TV. £17,999 ono. 07772 724975.

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3

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4

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2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.

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business & Farming

business opportunities

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business directory

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6

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PEUGEOT 307. 72,500 miles, MoT till Aug. 02 plate, alloy wheels, good runner. £775. 07531 819599.

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public & legal notices

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general

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Tipton is lifted off league bottom

Quorn 2 Tipton 2
TIPTON Town climbed off the foot of the Midland League Premier Division table with a fighting draw against a side tipped for a play-off place.

But the Black Country outfit are still deep in the relegation mire after only their fourth league win of the season.

Quorn won 4-0 when Tipton hosted them earlier in the season and would have expected more from this match.

Tipton had what they thought was the opening goal by Steve Weaver but it was ruled offside.

Keeper Jack Hayfield came to Tipton's rescue in the 23rd minute with a breathtaking save from Matt Blake.

The visitors took the lead five minutes before the break when Gurjit Singh reacted quicker than the Quorn defence.

Quorn were reduced to 10 men when Prenderville was sent off over a challenge on Ashley Stewart.

But Quorn were level in the 51st minute through Sam Hollis.

Tipton again went in front through Chris Poyntz.

Quorn denied the visitors in the final minute when Dominic Brennan's drive whistled past Hayfield to grab a point.

Canaries have eye on Dorrans

NORWICH are hoping to seal a permanent £2m move for out-of-favour Albion midfielder Graham Dorrans in the summer.

The Scotland international officially moved to the Canaries last week in a loan deal that runs until March 22.

But it's understood the Championship play-off chasers are looking to bag the 27-year-old permanently, although talk of a £4m switch is wide of the mark.

Dorrans was a bargain £150,000 from Livingstone in 2008 and has made nearly 200 appearances for Albion but has struggled to be a Premier League regular at The Hawthorns. It's believed the Baggies are willing to listen to offers.

Penalty delivers late blow for Tim's team

Villa 1 Stoke 2
STOKE dramatically spoiled Tim Sherwood's debut as Villa boss after Victor Moses' injury-time penalty gave them a 2-1 win at Villa Park.

The winger was brought down by Ron Vlaar - who was sent off - to win it for the Potters at the death.

Scott Sinclair had headed Villa in front only for Mame Biram Diouf to level just before the break.

Defeat kept the hosts in the bottom three of the Premier League and underlined the job Sherwood has to keep them up.

He made his mark on the team by dropping

Football

ping Ashley Westwood and Tom Cleverley as Carlos Sanchez, Charles Gil, Gabriel Agbonlahor, Kieran Richardson, Sinclair and Brad Guzan returned.

Jonathan Walters was back for Stoke after a knee problem with Asmir Begovic recalled after being rested in the FA Cup against Blackburn with Marc Wilson, Erik Pieters and Stephen Ireland available after injury.

Sherwood had promised endeavour and

goals in his pre-match programme notes but it was a quiet start from both sides.

Neither took control of the game but Villa got the early goal Sherwood craved when Sinclair, who scored his first goal since 2012 last week, opened the scoring.

Stoke wanted a foul after Sinclair and Phil Bardsley tangled from a corner but the ball fell to Fabian Delph who whipped a delightful cross in from the left for Sinclair to glance past Begovic from 12-yards.

If some Villa fans expected the floodgates to open after Sinclair's fine header they were left disappointed with the spark leaving the hosts.

And the game was ambling towards half-time only for Stoke to level out of the blue seconds before the break.

Walters teed up former Villa misfit Ireland and his cross was powered in by Diouf from seven yards.

Combative and unflustered Stoke started to scrap Villa out of the game and, while there was little quality from either side, the visitors had the impetus.

Guzan punched away Walters' angled volley yet there was nothing to suggest either side would grab a winner.

Vlaar scythed Moses down; was sent off and Moses then beat Guzan from the spot.

Old Hales give leaders run for their money

South Leicester 39 Old Halesonians 25
OLD Hales 1st XV travelled to league leaders South Leicester who are certain for promotion to National 2 league next season.

This was to become a close encounter from the kick off. The home side immediately got into their stride with their simple but effective catch and driving mauls from set play and lineouts in particular.

After nine minutes a catch and drive from Leicester resulted in a converted try despite stern defence by Hales.

Three minutes later Hales came back with driving runs from Pete Fitzgerald, Tom Jordan and Tom King. Hales backs were in tune with several attacking moves including Carl and Andy Robinson, Warren Oliver and Chris Hooper orchestrating.

On 12 minutes the pressure continued, Hooper received a ball in midfield and made a break to score a try wide out, missing the conversion.

The next 10 minutes saw Hales unnerving the opposition with crunching tackles, the home players were expecting to walk this game but Hales had other ideas.

Leicester fought back following an infringement.

Again a lineout, catch and drive for another converted try on 21 minutes put them 14-5 in the lead. Hales came back again from the kick off and forwards secured good ball.

Scrum half Greg Smith provided regular play to Gareth Bown at No.10.

Constant pressure by the Hales forwards and backs forced two penalties from

Lennox battles his way to his first belt



Lennox Clarke takes on Dan Blackwell

TITLE fighters Lennox Clarke and Des Bowater had to perform at their best to claim their first belts against co-challengers who hung in there until the final bell, writes Craig Birch.

Both went for British Masters Bronze honours in eight-round contests in the spacious Stadium Suite at Walsall Football Club's Banks's Stadium.

Halesowen's Clarke went in first for the organisation's super middleweight crown against Wiltshire scrapper Dan Blackwell.

The Trowbridge scrapper took his best shots from the off as he ploughed forward, Clarke teeing off from the jab to load stiff right hands straight to the face.

Blood oozed down from Blackwell's nose from the second round and forced him to take a step back in the next session, which only allowed Clarke more space to work.

Clarke asserted himself over the last two rounds to ensure there was nothing for Blackwell on the cards, scoring a resounding 80-72 points victory with referee Gareth Morris.

Clarke said: "I have worked hard and it's paid off. From the seventh I had to dig deep, but I have got the job done and it feels brilliant."

"Fair play to Dan, he took a lot of shots. There was no chance of blasting him out, so it was down to skill."

Rested swim team in third spot

HALESOWEN swimmers travelled to Droitwich for the second round of the Worcester Winter League.

This round saw swimmers well rested again ahead of important upcoming competitions and, as in the first round, swimmers stepping in swam superbly throughout the contest.

Worcester were fielding two strong teams and are clearly looking like the team to beat in this year's competitions.

Halesowen swimmers performed strongly and a third place finish on the night sees them through to the A final in April.

Star of the show was double individual event winner Mark Laing who excelled in both the butterfly and freestyle categories.

Other individual event winners were Lauren Hill in the butterfly and Lily Merrell in the breaststroke.

The age 15 and under relay team which included team members Emma Bird, Talia Mitchell, Jakob Baker and Jack Simpson won both medley and freestyle events.

Final point scores on the night were Worcester A 205, Worcester B 176, Halesowen 173, Droitwich 126, Stourbridge B 118.

Hardman Vinnie in Brum date

EX-FOOTBALLER turned-movie star Vinnie Jones is coming to Birmingham for An Evening With event.

Jones will be at the Hilton Metropole, part of the NEC in Birmingham, on Wednesday May 6.

There will be two boxing favourites sharing the top table with Jones, who will also be staging a question and answer session.

'Big' Joe Egan, a former sparring partner of Mike Tyson, will be with former WBC world welterweight champion John H. Streeby.

Admission is £150 per person, which includes a four-course meal. Go to www.phoenixgroupplc.com or call Guv Shergill on 07738 377 623.



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SPORT

Ball battle

Old Hales give league leaders a good run

Page 35

First belt

Lennox fights his way to victory in title bout

Page 35



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Baggies fan club to open at centre

ALBION'S official supporters club will open its new pre-match base on Saturday ahead of the Baggies' Premier League game at home to Southampton.

The West Bromwich Albion Supporters Club has secured the use of a room at the Supreme Banqueting and Conference Centre in Roebuck Lane, West Bromwich, just a short walk from The Hawthorns.

The venue, which will also be available after the game, will be officially opened by two former Baggies stars at noon, three hours before the crucial game at home to the Saints.

The supporters' club has been without a permanent pre-match home since the closure of the Hawthorns pub next to the ground in 2009. They used a suite inside the stadium for some games last season but supporters' club chairman John Homer hopes the new venue will help boost membership and give fans another option before home games.

He said: "I think the big thing is that it's another venue for people to go and get together and have a drink before a game. The Vine and The Sportsman are nearby and people queue to get into them, so hopefully this will mean more fans can get together before kick-off."

Matthew to get a shot

AN unknown darter from Smethwick is heading to the PDC's UK Open after netting a wildcard spot through a qualifier in Wolverhampton.

Matthew Tedstone is now dreaming of upsetting the big boys at the 'FA Cup of Darts' next month, after coming through a three-figure field.

Wolverhampton's Dean Stewart has again also won himself a place – and this year he will be going straight into the second round.

He will be joined at the Butlins holiday resort in Minehead by fellow Wulfrunian Wayne Jones, Dudley's Mark Jones and Stourbridge's Nick Fullwell.

The 128-man UK Open will take place at the Butlins holiday resort in Minehead and will run from March 6 to 8, in front of the ITV4 television cameras.

Heathens are happy with loyalty of backers

CRADLEY boss Will Pottinger has hailed the club's partners for continuing their backing despite their relocation to Perry Barr.

The Heathens saw their future thrown into limbo at the end of last season when their Monmore Green home became unavailable before they quickly secured a move to the Birmingham venue for the new campaign.

Despite their move, they have already enjoyed a hugely successful season off the track with a large number of season ticket sales plus excellent support from local busi-

Speedway

nesses.

Cradley Heath-based Motor Market have stepped up their involvement to become main team sponsors whilst Recycled Aggregates, Curtis Sport and Ron Homer have continued as club partners.

They have also welcomed on board Venue Cuisine as a partner as they continue to build for the defence of their National League title.

After overcoming a rocky period over

the winter, Pottinger is thrilled to see local businesses continue to back the Heathens as they prepare for an exciting year.

He said: "We weren't too sure how people would react to us moving to Perry Barr, but to see the reaction we've had not only from fans but from sponsors has been hugely positive."

"We are going into our sixth season now, and to see the level of support the club continues to receive is really tremendous."

"Motor Market have been with us for a couple of years now as team partners, so it's great to see them step up and become

our full team sponsors. Of course they are based in Cradley Heath, not very far from the old Dudley Wood track, so there is a nice connection there with the history of the Heathens."

"It's also good to see Recycled Aggregates, Ron Homer and Curtis Sport staying on board after last year and continuing their support despite our move to a new location."

The Heathens side will go through their paces at Perry Barr for pre-season press and practice on Wednesday, March 11, at 2pm.

Blues are sunk by Sears

Ipswich 4 Blues 2

FREDDIE SEARS bagged a brace as Ipswich got their promotion challenge back on track with a 4-2 home win over battling Birmingham.

Tyrone Mings grabbed his first Ipswich goal in the 24th minute before an absorbing second half saw both Sears and Blues' David Davis score twice before Kevin Bru made the game safe in stoppage time.

Ipswich opened the scoring when Mings powerfully head met Paul Anderson's corner to send home his first goal for the club.

Ipswich doubled their lead when Sears raced through slot home four minutes after the interval.

But Birmingham reduced the deficit when Paul Caddis' pinpoint cross was beautifully turned in by the head of midfielder Davis.

Ipswich restored their two-goal advantage when Sears exploited a mistake and drill the ball into the far corner.

Blues pulled a goal back with 12 minutes remaining through Davis.

The game was on a knife-edge until Bru was on hand to poke in a rebound.

Albion link to striker Otoo

GHANA striker Mahatma Otoo has claimed Albion are keeping tabs on him.

The forward, who plays for Sogndal in the Norwegian Premier League, believes a move may happen at the end of the season.

"Yes I have heard about it (the interest)," said Otoo, who has seven caps for the national side.

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YELTZ SUFFER A SECOND DEFEAT

Manchester FC Utd 1 Halesowen 0

A BATTLING performance by the Yeltz in Manchester was not enough.

They went down to their second successive 1-0 defeat. FC United in contrast have won five games in a row and are top of the Evo-Stik Northern Premier on goal difference, with six games in hand on second-placed Skelmersdale.

The first chance fell to United when Greg Daniels saw a shot well saved by Matthew Sargeant in the Halesowen goal.

Daniels and Aaron Griffiths were yellow carded on 33 minutes after a clash and Tom Greaves put a header into the side netting for FC United on 39 minutes.

Chances continued to be few and far between in front of a vociferous home crowd although Halesowen were looking dangerous on the break, but being contained well by the home defence.

Deadlock

It was Daniels though who broke the deadlock for the home side on 71 minutes when he pounced on a loose ball to force it home.

Halesowen manager John Hill made a double substitution to try and force an equaliser but it was to no avail and Halesowen stay ninth in the table, with the return game against FC United to come.

Attendance: 2,007
Nantwich Town 1
Halesowen Town 0

Halesowen missed the chance of improving their play-off prospects when they were beaten by lowly Nantwich.

A 12th-minute goal by

Football

Max Harrop, who smashed the ball home from 18 yards, was enough to give the Cheshire outfit the points in the Evo-Stik Premier clash.

The Yeltz rarely threatened in the first half, Iyden Christie's shot from the edge of the box after 10 minutes clearing the crossbar.

The first chance of the second half fell to Halesowen sub Ben Haseley, whose shot was saved by Terry Smith with comfort. Then Tom Tonks had a volley which was saved by the Nantwich keeper.

As the match entered three minutes of stoppage time Smith had to make two excellent saves to prevent an equaliser.

Nantwich had one final chance when Matty Kosylo broke down the wing before playing in Mark Winslade. But his shot was blocked by Halesowen keeper Craig Sargeant.

Meanwhile, Joel Kettle is poised to leave the Yeltz for Sutton Coldfield Town.

The club are said to be disappointed Kettle has opted to leave after being a key part of the team this season.

Two-goal star sako gives Wolves another win



Bakary Sako celebrates after scoring his second goal to make it 3-0 against Fulham

KENNY JACKETT is confident Bakary Sako will remain focused on Wolves after stealing the show on Tuesday night.

Sako was the star of Wolves' 3-0 win against Fulham, scoring two in five minutes before the break to take his tally to 10 for the season and setting up Danny Bath's 10th-minute headed opener.

The Mail international, who is out of contract this summer, decided to

stay at Wolves despite heavy interest from Albion and QPR in the transfer window.

Wolves turned down three bids of around £2m, including one from a foreign club. Sako is again a wanted man but Jackett, who took the winger off after 57 minutes because of stomach cramps, is convinced the 26-year-old won't lose his spark in the run-in. "We have done really well to keep him as long as we have," said

Jackett. "Sako is very relaxed about the situation and doesn't want to talk about his future at the moment."

"With the end of the season being so close – you're probably looking at 10-and-a-half weeks of the regular season left – he is happy to focus on Wolves and do everything he can to get us one of those promotion places. I've been delighted with his attitude. He's always been an important player for us."

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